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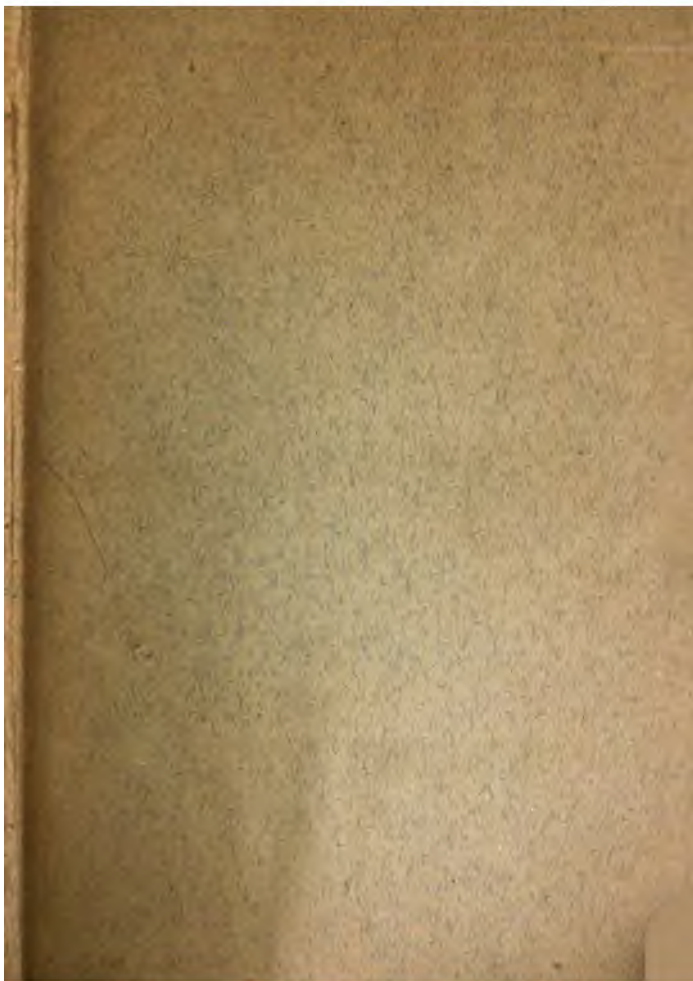
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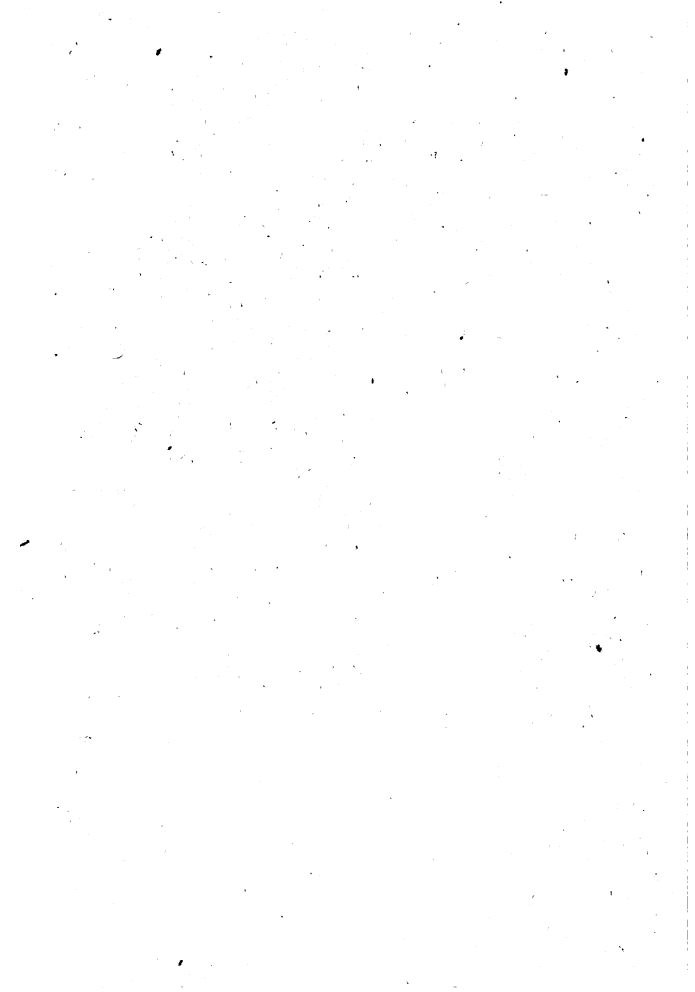
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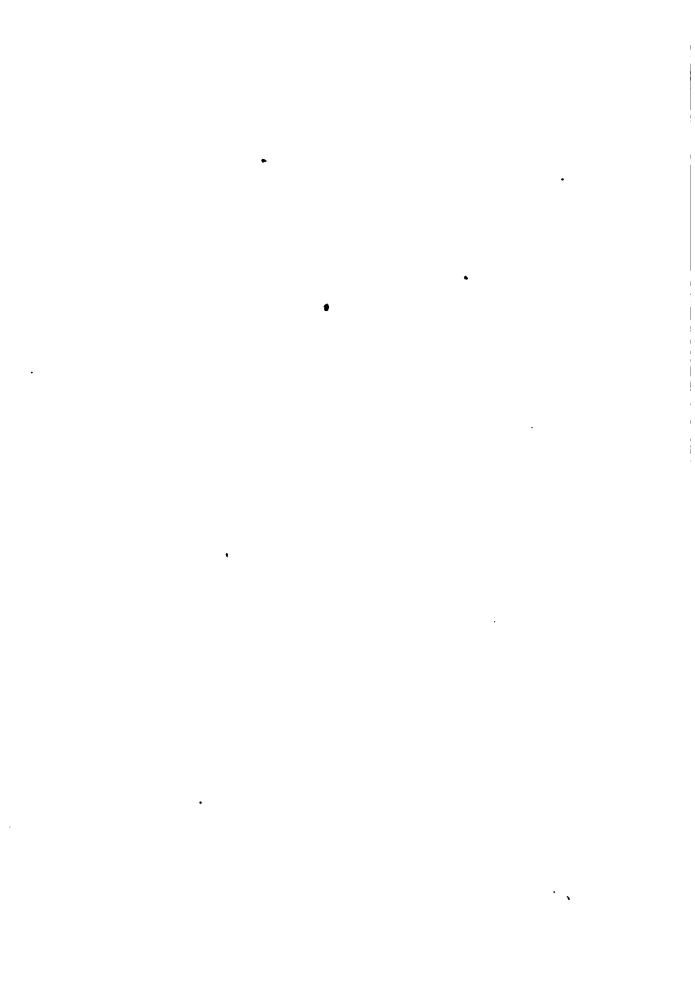
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L. Robinson.

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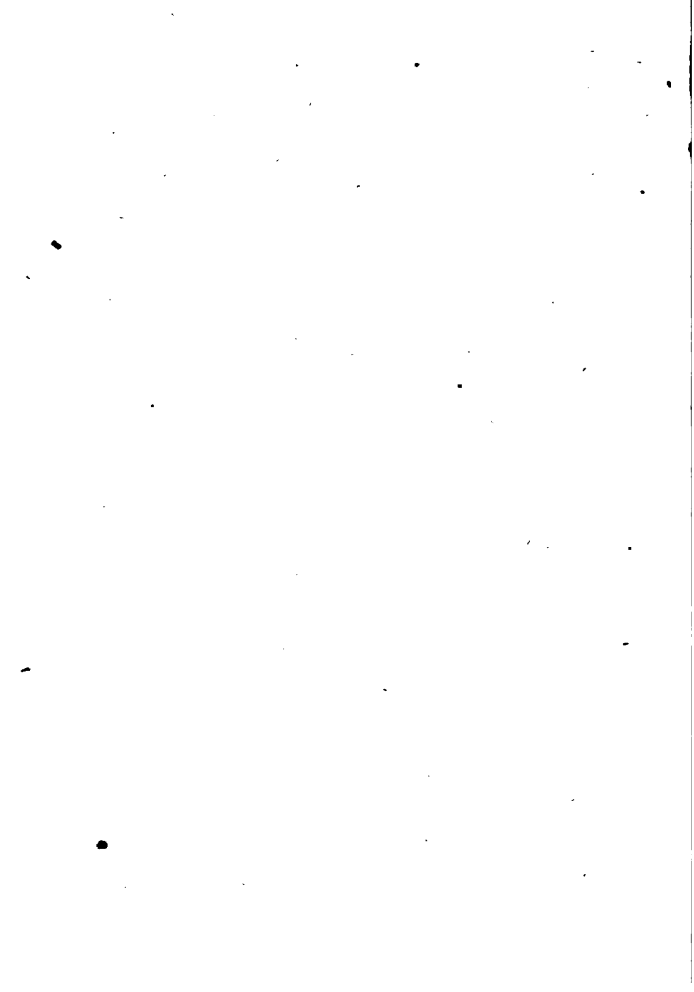
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THE
LETTERS
OF
THOMAS GRAY.

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED
FROM THE
WALPOLE AND MASON COLLECTIONS.

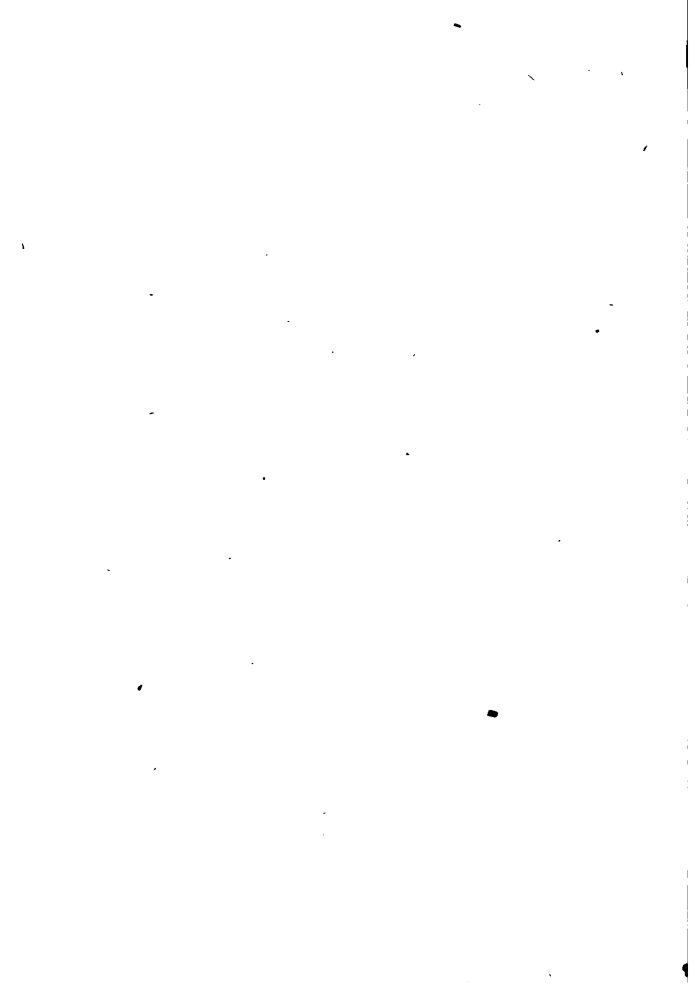
VOL. I.

MDCCCXX.



MOST of the numerous editions of the Poetical Works of GRAY have his Biography prefixed, from the materials furnished by Mr. Mason's Memoirs. The present edition of his correspondence professes to give his "LETTERS" only. The Orford collection has furnished fourteen, which have been inserted in their proper places ; but the notes, excepting a few marked B. (Lord Orford's editor, Mr. Berry) are taken from Mr. Mason's edition.

The propriety of retaining the few Letters of Gray's early friend, Mr. WEST, will be readily admitted by the reader.



LETTERS
OF
THOMAS GRAY.

I.

FROM MR. WEST* TO MR. GRAY.

You use me very cruelly : you have sent me but one letter since I have been at Oxford, and that too agreeable not to make me sensible how great my loss is in not having more. Next to seeing you is the pleasure of seeing your hand-writing ; next to hearing you is the pleasure of hearing from you.

* Mr. West's father was lord chancellor of Ireland. His grandfather, by the mother, the famous bishop Burnet. He removed from Eton to Oxford, about the same time that Mr. Gray left that place for Cambridge. In April, 1738, he left Christ Church for the Inner Temple, and Mr. Gray removed from Peterhouse to town the latter end of that year ; intending also to apply himself to the study of the law in the same society.

Really and sincerely I wonder at you, that you thought it not worth while to answer my last letter. I hope this will have better success in behalf of your quondam school-fellow ; in behalf of one who has walked hand in hand with you, like the two children in the wood,

Through many a flowery path and shilly gow,
Where learning lull'd us in her private maze.

The very thought, you see, tips my pen with poetry, and brings Eton to my view. Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves doctors and masters of arts ; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown ; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light, and then think if something be not due to

Yours.

~~Christ Church, Nov. 14, 1735.~~

P. S. I desire you will send me soon, and truly and positively, a History of your own time.*

* Alluding to his grandfather's history.

II.

TO MR. WEST.

PERMIT me again to write to you, though I have so long neglected my duty, and forgive my brevity, when I tell you, it is occasioned wholly by the hurry I am in- to get to a place where I expect to meet with no other pleasure than the sight of you ; for I am preparing for London in a few days at further. I do not wonder in the least at your frequent blaming my indolence, it ought rather to be called ingratitude, and I am obliged to your goodness for softening so harsh an appellation. When we meet, it will, however, be my greatest of pleasures to know what you do, what you read, and how you spend your time, &c. &c. and to tell what I do not read, and how I do not, &c. for almost all the employment of my hours may be best explained by negatives ; take my word and experience upon it, doing nothing is a most amusing business ; and yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life ; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying

he makes a progress, and gets some ground ; my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty steps more, I shall be just where I was : I may, better than most people, say my life is but a span, were I not afraid lest you should not believe that a person so short lived could write even so long a letter as this ; in short, I believe I must not send you the history of my own time, till I can send you that also of the Reformation.* However, as the most undeserving people in the world must sure have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own, in being pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe you are not in danger of being crowded there ; it is asking you to an old play, indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuse the whole piece for the sake of a few tolerable lines.

For this little while past I have been playing with Statius ; we yesterday had a game at quoits together : you will easily for-

* Carrying on the allusion to the other history written by Mr. West's grandfather.

give me for having broke his head, as you have a little pique to him. I send you my translation, which I did not engage in because I liked that part of the poem, nor do I now send it to you because I think it deserves it, but merely to show you how I mispend my days.

Third in the labours of the Disc came on,
With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon, &c.*

Cambridge, May 8, 1736.

III.

FROM MR. WEST.

I AGREE with you that you have broke Statius's head, but it is in like manner as Apollo broke Hyacinth's, you have foiled him infinitely at his own weapon: I must insist on seeing the rest of your translation, and then I will examine it entire, and compare

* See *Poems*. As all the fragments and posthumous pieces of poetry have been included in the later editions of Mr. Gray's poetical works, it has not been always thought necessary to give them at large in this edition of his "*Letters*:" an exception to this rule has however been made in favour of Mr. West's poems; and the *poemata* of Mr. Gray sometimes could not be omitted without violence to his correspondence.

it with the Latin, and be very wise and severe, and put on an inflexible face, such as becomes the character of a true son of Aristarchus, of hypercritical memory. In the mean while,

And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold,

is exactly Statius—Summos auro mansueverat ungues. I never knew before that the golden fangs on hammercloths were so old a fashion. Your Hymenéal I was told was the best in the Cambridge collection before I saw it, and, indeed, it is no great compliment to tell you I thought it so when I had seen it, but sincerely it pleased me best. Methinks the college bards have run into a strange taste on this occasion. Such soft unmeaning stuff about Venus and Cupid, and Peleus and Thetis, and Zephyrs and Dryads, was never read. As for my poor little Eclogue, it has been condemned and beheaded by our Westminster judges; an exordium of about sixteen lines absolutely cut off, and its other limbs quartered in a most barbarous manner. I will send it you in my next as my true and lawful heir, in exclusion of the pretender, who has the impudence to appear under my name.

As yet I have not looked into sir Isaac. Public disputations I hate; mathematics I

reverence; history, morality, and natural philosophy have the greatest charms in my eye; but who can forget poetry? they call it idleness, but it is surely the most enchanting thing in the world, "*ac dulce otium et pæne omni negotio pulchrius.*"

I am, dear sir, yours while I am
R. W.

Christ Church, May 24, 1736.

IV.

TO MR. WEST.

You must know that I do not take degrees, and, after this term, shall have nothing more of college impertinences to undergo, which I trust will be some pleasure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last, supported by the hopes of being shortly at full liberty to give myself up to my friends and classical companions, who, poor souls! though I see them fallen into great contempt with most people here, yet I cannot help sticking to them, and out of a spirit of obstinacy (I think) love them the better for it; and, indeed, what can I do else? Must I plunge into

metaphysics? Alas! I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas! I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said, "the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den forever, a joy of wild asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch and gather under her shadow; it shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." You see here is a pretty collection of desolate animals, which is verified in this town to a tittle, and perhaps it may also allude to your habitation, for you know all types may

be taken by abundance of handles; however, I defy your owls to match mine.

If the default of your spirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to say. We all must submit to that wayward queen; I too in no small degree own her sway.

I feel her influence while I speak her power.

But if it be a real distemper, pray take more care of your health, if not for your own at least for our sakes, and do not be so soon weary of this little world: I do not know what refined* friendships you may have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in a hurry to see your acquaintance above; among your terrestrial familiars, however, though I say it that should not say it, there positively is not one that has a greater esteem for you than

Yours most sincerely, &c.

Peterhouse, Dec. 1736.

* Perhaps he meant to ridicule the affected manner of Mrs. Rowe's letters from the dead to the living.

V.

FROM MR. WEST.

I CONGRATULATE you on your being about to leave college,* and rejoice much you carry no degrees with you. For I would not have You dignified, and I not, for the world, you would have insulted me so. My eyes, such as they are, like yours, are neither metaphysical nor mathematical; I have, nevertheless, a great respect for your connoisseurs that way, but am always contented to be their humble admirer. Your collection of desolate animals pleased me so much: but Oxford, I can assure you, has her owls that match yours, and the prophecy has certainly a squint that way. Well, you are leaving this dismal land of bondage, and which way are you turning your face? Your friends, indeed, may be happy in you, but what will you do with your classic companions? An inn of court is as horrid a place

* I suspect that Mr. West mistook his correspondent; who, in saying he did not take degrees, meant only to let his friend know that he should soon be released from lectures and disputations. It is certain that Mr. Gray continued at college near two years after the time he wrote the preceding letter.

as a collège, and a moot case is as dear to gentle dulness as a syllogism. But wherever you go, let me beg you not to throw poetry, "like a nauseous weed away;" cherish its sweets in your bosom; they will serve you now and then to correct the disgusting sober follies of the common law, *misce stultitiam consiliis brevem, dulce est desipere in loco*; so said Horace to Virgil, those two sons of Anac in poetry, and so say I to you, in this degenerate land of pigmies,

Mix with your grave designs a little pleasure,
Each day of business has its hour of leisure.

In one of these hours I hope, dear sir, you will sometimes think of me, write to me, and know me yours,

Ἐξαυδα, μὴ παύῃς ποτὶ ἐνὰ σιδομένῳ ἀμφοῖ

that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you, and to give you a proof of it, I have sent you an elegy of Tibullus translated. Tibullus, you must know, is my favourite elegiac poet; for his language is more elegant and his thoughts more natural than Ovid's. Ovid excels him only in wit, of

which no poet had more in my opinion, . . . The reason I choose so melancholy a kind of poesie, is because my low spirits and constant ill health (things in me not imaginary, as you surmise, but too real, alas! and, I fear, constitutional) "have tuned my heart to elegies of woe;" and this likewise is the reason why I am the most irregular thing alive at college, for you may depend upon it I value my health above what they call discipline. As for this poor unlicked thing of an elegy, pray criticise it unmercifully, for I send it with that intent. Indeed your late translation of Statius might have deterred me: but I know you are not more able to excel others, than you are apt to forgive the want of excellence, especially when it is found in the productions of

Your most sincere friend.

Christ Church, Dec. 22, 1736.

VI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

You can never weary me with the repetition of any thing that makes me sensible of your kindness: since that has been the only

idea of any social happiness that I have almost ever received, and which (begging your pardon for thinking so differently from you in such cases) I would by no means have parted with for an exemption from all the uneasinesses mixed with it: But it would be unjust to imagine my taste was any rule for yours; for which reason my letters are shorter and less frequent than they would be, had I any materials but myself to entertain you with. Love and brown sugar must be a poor regale for one of your goût, and, alas! you know I am by trade a grocer.* Scandal (if I had any) is a merchandise you do not profess dealing in; now and then, indeed, and to oblige a friend, you may perhaps slip a little out of your pocket, as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin, or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it. Monsters appertaining to this climate you have seen already, both wet and dry. So you perceive within how narrow bounds my pen is circumscribed, and the whole contents of my share in our corres-

* i.e. A man who deals only in coarse and ordinary wares: to these he compares the plain sincerity of his own friendship, undiagnised by flattery; which, had he chosen to carry on the allusion, he might have termed the trade of a Confectioner.

pondence may be reduced under the two heads of 1st, You, 2dly, I; the first is, indeed a subject to expatiate upon, but you might laugh at me for talking about what I do not understand; the second is so tiny, so tiresome, that you shall hear no more of it than that it is ever

Yours.

Peterhouse, Dec, 23, 1736.

VII.

FROM MR. WEST.

I HAVE been very ill, and am still hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus, Vos tenet, &c. and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in sickness, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy and this melancholy letter I turned into a more melancholy epistle of my own, during my sickness, in the way of imitation; and this I send to you and my friends at Cambridge, not to divert them, for it cannot, but merely to show them how sincere I was when sick: I hope my sending it to them now may convince them I am no less sincere, though perhaps more simple, when well.

AD AMICOS.*

Yes, happy youths, on Camus' sedgy side,
 You feel each joy that friendship can divide ;
 Each realm of science and of art explore,
 And with the ancient blend the modern lore.
 Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend
 To raise the genius or the heart to mend ;
 Now pleased along the cloister'd walk you rove,
 And trace the verdant mazes of the grove,
 Where social oft, and oft alone, ye choose
 To catch the zephyr and to court the muse.
 Meantime at me (while all devoid of art
 These lines give back the image of my heart)
 At me the power that comes or soon or late,
 Or aims, or seems to aim, the dart of fate ;
 From you remote, methinks, alone I stand
 Like some sad exile in a desert land ;
 Around no friends their lenient care to join
 In mutual warmth, and mix their heart with mine.
 Or real pains, or those which fancy raise,
 For ever blot the sunshine of my days ;
 To sickness still, and still to grief a prey,
 Health turns from me her rosy face away.

Just Heaven ! what sin, ere life begins to bloom,
 Devotes my head untimely to the tomb ?
 Did e'er this hand against a brother's life
 Drag the dire bowl, or point the murderous knife ?
 Did e'er this tongue the slanderer's tale proclaim,

* Almost all Tibullus's elegy is imitated in this little piece, from whence his transition to Mr. Pope's letter is very artfully contrived, and bespeaks a degree of judgement much beyond Mr. West's years.

Or madly violate my Maker's name?
 Did e'er this heart betray a friend or foe,
 Or know a thought but all the world might know?
 As yet, just started from the lists of time,
 My growing years have scarcely told their prime;
 Useless, as yet, through life I've idly run,
 No pleasures tasted, and few duties done.

* Ah, who, ere autumn's mellowing suns appear,
 Would pluck the promise of the vernal year?
 Or, ere the grapes their purple hue betray,
 Tear the crude cluster from the mourning spray?
 Stern Power of Fate, whose ebony sceptre rules
 The Stygian deserts and Cimmerian pools,
 Forbear, nor rashly smite my youthful heart,
 A victim yet unworthy of thy dart;
 Ah, stay till age shall blast my withering face,
 Shake in my head, and falter in my pace;
 Then aim the shaft, then meditate the blow,
 † And to the dead my willing shade shall go.

How weak is Man to Reason's judging eye!
 Born in this moment, in the next we die;
 Part mortal clay, and part ethereal fire,
 Too proud to creep, too humble to aspire.
 In vain our plans of happiness we raise,
 Pain is our lot, and patience is our praise;
 Wealth, lineage, honour, conquest, or a throne,

* Quid fraudare juvat vitem crescentibus uvis?
 Et modo nata mala vellere poma manu?

So the original. The paraphrase seems to me infinitely more beautiful. There is a peculiar blemish in the second line, arising from the synonyms *mala* and *poma*.

† Here he quits Tiballus: the ten following verses have but a remote reference to Mr. Pope's letter.

Are what the wise would fear to call their own.
 Health is at best a vain precarious thing,
 And fair-faced youth is ever on the wing :
 * 'Tis like the stream, beside whose watery bed
 Some blooming plant exalts his flowery head,
 Nursed by the wave the spreading branches rise,
 Shade all the ground and flourish to the skies ;
 The waves the while beneath in secret flow,
 And undermine the hollow bank below ;
 Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
 Bare all the roots, and on their fibres prey.
 Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,
 And sinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.

But why repine ? does life deserve my sigh ?
 Few will lament my loss whene'er I die.
 † For those the wretches I despise or hate,
 I neither envy nor regard their fate.
 For me, whene'er all-conquering Death shall spread
 His wings around my unrepining head,
 ‡ I care not ; though this face be seen no more,

* " Youth, at the very best, is but the betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age : 'tis like the stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret." *Pope's Works*, vol. 7. page 254, 1st. edit. Warburton. Mr. West, by prolonging his paraphrase of this simile, gives it additional beauty from that very circumstance, but he ought to have introduced it by Mr. Pope's own thought. " Youth is a betrayer ;" his couplet preceding the simile conveys too general a reflection.

† " I am not at all uneasy at the thought that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me." *Vide ibid.*

‡ " The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green ;" so

The world will pass as cheafal as before ;
 Bright as before the day-star will appear,
 The fields as verdant, and the skies as clear ;
 Nor storms nor comets will my doom declare,
 Nor signs on earth, nor portents in the air ;
 Unknown and silent will depart my breath,
 Nor Nature e'er take notice of my death.
 Yet some there are (ere spent my vital days)
 Within whose breasts my tomb I wish to raise.
 Loved in my life, lamented in my end,
 Their praise would crown me as their precepts mend :
 To them may these fond lines my name endear,
 Not from the Poet but the Friend sincere.

Christ Church, July 4, 1737.

VIII.

TO MR. WEST.

AFTER a month's expectation of you, and a fortnight's despair, at Cambridge, I am come

far Mr. West copies his original, but instead of the following part of the sentence, "People will laugh as heartily and merrily as fast as they used to do," he inserts a more solemn idea,

Nor storms nor comets, &c.

justly perceiving that the elegiac turn of his epistle would not admit so ludicrous a thought, as was in its place in Mr Pope's familiar letter ; so that we see, young as he was, he had obtained the art of judiciously selecting ; one of the first provinces of good taste.

to town, and to better hopes of seeing you. If what you sent me last be the product of your melancholy, what may I not expect from your more cheerful hours? For by this time the ill-health that you complain of is (I hope) quite departed; though, if I were self-interested, I ought to wish for the continuance of any thing that could be the occasion of so much pleasure to me. Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose, and force a feeble laugh with me: but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world. However, when you come, I believe they must undergo the fate of all humble companions, and be discarded. Would I could turn them to the same use that you have done, and make an Apollo of them. If they could write such verses with me, not hartshorn, nor spirit of amber, nor all that furnishes the closet of an apothecary's widow, should persuade me to part with them: But, while I write to you, I hear the bad news of Lady Walpole's death on Saturday night last. Forgive me if the thought of what my poor Horace must feel on that ac-

count, obliges me to have done in reminding you that I am

Yours, &c.

London, Aug. 22, 1737.

IX.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

I was hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road, which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you: suffice it that I arrived safe* at my uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort amidst all this is, that I have, at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good

* At Burnham in Buckinghamshire.

as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous. Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
In murmuring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats me I, (il penseroso) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud too, that is talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg

pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us: he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September, 1737.

X.

TO MR. WALPOLE.*

I SYMPATHIZE with you in the sufferings which you foresee are coming upon you. We are both at present, I imagine, in no very agreeable situation; for my part I am under the misfortune of having nothing to do, but it is a misfortune which, thank my stars, I can pretty well bear. You are in a confusion of wine, and roaring, and hunting, and tobacco, and, heaven be praised, you too can pretty well bear it; while our evils are no more, I believe we shall not much repine. I imagine, however, you will rather choose

*At this time with his father at Houghton.

to converse with the living dead, that adorn the walls of your apartments, than with the dead living that deck the middles of them; and prefer a picture of still life to the realities of a noisy one, and, as I guess, will imitate what you prefer, and for an hour or two at noon will stick yourself up as formal as if you had been fixed in your frame for these hundred years, with a pink or rose in one hand, and a great seal ring on the other. Your name, I assure you, has been propagated in these countries by a convert of yours, one * * * ; he has brought over his whole family to you: they were before pretty good Whigs, but now they are absolute Walpolians. We have hardly any body in the parish but knows exactly the dimensions of the hall and saloon at Houghton, and begin to believe that the *lantern is not so great a consumer of the fat of the land as disaffected persons have said: For your reputation, we keep to ourselves your not hunting nor drinking hogan, either of which here would be sufficient to lay your honour in the dust. To-morrow se'night I hope to be in town, and not long after at Cambridge.

I am, &c.

Burnham, Sept: 1737.

* A favourite object of Tory satire at the time.

XI.

FROM MR. WEST TO MR. GRAY.

RECEIVING no answer to my last letter, which I writ above a month ago, I must own I am a little uneasy. The slight shadow of you which I had in town, has only served to endear you to me the more. The moments I passed with you made a strong impression upon me. I singled you out for a friend, and I would have you know me to be yours, if you deem me worthy. Alas, Gray, you cannot imagine how miserably my time passes away. My health and nerves and spirits are, thank my stars, the very worst, I think, in Oxford. Four-and-twenty hours of pure unalloyed health together, are as unknown to me as the 400,000 characters in the Chinese vocabulary. One of my complaints has of late been so over-civil as to visit me regularly once a month—jam certus conviva. This is a painful nervous headache, which perhaps you have sometimes heard me speak of before. Give me leave to say, I find no physic comparable to your letters. If, as it is said in Ecclesiasticus, "Friendship be the physic of the mind,"

prescribe to me, dear Gray, as often and as much as you think proper, I shall be a most obedient patient.

Non ego

Fidis irascar medicis, offender amicis.

I venture here to write you down a Greek epigram,* which I lately turned into Latin, and hope you will excuse it.

Perspicui puerum ludentem in margine rivi

Immersit vitree limpidus error aquæ :

At gelido ut mater moribundum e flumine traxit

Credula, et amplexu funus inane fovet ;

Paulatim puer in dilecto pectore, somno

Languidus, æternum lumina composuit.

Adieu ! I am going to my tutor's lectures on one Puffendorff, a very jurisprudent author as you shall read on a summer's day.

Believe me yours, &c.

Christ Church, Dec. 2, 1738.

* Of Posidippus. *Vide Anthologia, II. Stephan. p. 230.*

XII.

TO MR. WEST.

LITERAS mî Favonî!* abs te demum, nudius-tertius credo, accepi plane mellitas, nisi forte quâ de ægritudine quâdam tuâ dictum: atque hoc sane mihi habitum est non paulo acerbius, quod te capitis morbo implicitum esse intellexi; oh morbum mihi quam odiosum! qui de industriâ id agit, ut ego in singulos menses, Dii boni, quantis jucunditatibus orbarer! quam ex animo mihi dolendum est, quod

Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid!

Salutem, mehercule, nolo, tam parvipendas, atque amicis tam improbe consulas: quamquam tute fortassis æstuas angusto limite mundi, viamque (ut dicitur) affectas Olympo, nos tamen non esse tam sublimes, utpote qui hisce in sordibus et fæce diutius paululum versari volumus, reminiscendum est: illæ tuæ Musæ, si te ament modo, derelinqui

* Mr. Gray, in all his Latin compositions, addressed to this gentleman, calls him Favonius, in allusion to the name of West.

paulisper non nimis ægre patientur: indulge, amabo te, plusquam soles, corporis exercitationibus: magis te campus habeat, aprico magis te dedas otio, ut ne id ingenium quod tam cultum curas, diligenter nimis dum foves, officioſarum matrum ritu, interimas. Vide quæſo, quam *κατὰ* tecum agimus,

πὲρ ἰατρικῆς

Φαρμάκ' αὖτις παύσασθαι μάλα μὲν ἔδουσαν.

Si de his pharmacis non satis liquet, sunt festivitates mæres, sunt facetiæ et risus; quos ego equidem si adhibere nequeo, tamen ad præcipiendum (ut medicorum fere mos est) certe satis sim; id, quod poetice sub finem epistolæ lusisti, mihi gratissimum quidem accidit; admodum Latine coctum et conditum tetrasticon, Græcam tamen illam *αφ' ἑαυτῆς* mirifice sapit: tu quod restat, vide, sodes, hujusce hominis ignorantiam; cum, unde hoc tibi sit depromptum, (ut fatear) prorsus nescio: sane ego equidem nihil in capsis reperio quo tibi minimæ partis solutio fiat. Vale, et me ut soles, ama.

A. D. 11 Kalend. Februar.

XIII.*

FROM MR. WEST.

I OUGHT to answer you in Latin, but I feel I dare not enter the lists with you—*cupidum, pater optime, vires deficiunt*. Seriously, you write in that language with a grace and an Augustan urbanity, that amazes me: Your Greek too is perfect in its kind. And here let me wonder that a man, *longe Græcorum doctissimus*, should be at a loss for the verse and chapter whence my epigram is taken. I am sorry I have not my Aldus with me, that I might satisfy your curiosity; but he, with all my other literary folks, are left at Oxford, and therefore you must still rest in suspense. I thank you again and again for your medical prescription. I know very well that those "*risus, festivitates, et facetiæ*" would contribute greatly to my cure, but then you must be my apothecary as well as physician, and make up the dose as well as direct it; send me, therefore, an electuary

* This was written in French, but as I doubted whether it would stand the test of polite criticism, so well as the preceding would of learned, I chose to translate so much of it as I thought necessary in order to preserve the chain of correspondence.

of these drugs, made up "secundum artem, et eris mihi magnus Apollo," in both his capacities, as a god of poets and a god of physicians. Wish me joy of leaving my college, and leave yours as fast as you can. I shall be settled at the temple very soon.

Dartmouth-Street, Feb. 21, 1737-8.

XIV.

TO MR. WEST.

* BARBARAS ædes aditure mecum
Quas Eris semper fovet inquieta,
Lis ubi late sonat, et togatum
Æstuat agmen !

Dulcius quanto, patulis sub ulmi
Hospitæ ramis temere jacentem
Sic libris horas, tenuique inertes
Fallere Musâ ?

Sæpe enim curis vagor expeditâ
Mente ; dum, blandam meditans Camœnam,
Vix malo rori, meminive seræ
Cedere nocti ;

* I choose to call this delicate Sapphic Ode the first original production of Mr. Gray's muse ; for verses imposed either by school masters or tutors, ought not, I think, to be taken into the consideration. There is seldom a verse that flows well from the pen of a real poet if it does not flow voluntarily.

XV.

FROM MR. WEST.

I RETURN you a thousand thanks for your elegant ode, and wish you every joy you wish yourself in it.—But, take my word for it, you will never spend so agreeable a day here as you describe : alas ! the sun with us only rises to show us the way to Westminster-Hall.—Nor must I forget thanking you for your little Alcaic fragment. The optic Naiads are infinitely obliged to you.

I was last week at Richmond Lodge, with Mr. Walpole, for two days, and dined with *Cardinal Fleury ; as far as my short sight can go, the character of his great art and penetration is very just, he is indeed

Nulli penetrabilis astro.

I go to-morrow to Epsom, where I shall be for about a month. Excuse me, I am in haste,† but believe me always, &c.

August 29, 1738.

* Sir Robert Walpole.

† Mr. West seems to have been, indeed, in haste when he writ this letter ; else, surely, his fine taste would have led him to have

XVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

My dear sir, I should say* Mr. Inspector General of the Exports and Imports ; but that appellation would make but an odd figure in conjunction with the three familiar monosyllables above written, for

*Non bene conveniunt nec in una sede morantur
Majestas et amor.*

Which is, being interpreted, Love does not live at the Custom-house ; however, by what style, title, or denomination soever you choose to be dignified or distinguished hereafter, these three words will stick by you like a bur, and you can no more get quit of these and your christian name than St. Anthony could of his pig. My motions at present (which you are pleased to ask

been more profuse in his praise of the Alcaic fragment. He might (I think) have said, without paying too extravagant a compliment to Mr. Gray's genius, that no poet of the Augustan age ever produced four more perfect lines, or what would sooner impose upon the best critic, as being a genuine ancient composition.

* Mr. Walpole was just named to that post, which he exchanged soon after for that of Usher of the Exchequer.

after) are much like those of a pendulum or (*Dr. Longically speaking) oscillatory. I swing from chapel or hall home, or from home to chapel or hall. All the strange incidents that happen in my journeys and returns I shall be sure to acquaint you with; the most wonderful is, that it now rains exceedingly, this has refreshed the prospect, as the way for the most part lies between green fields on either hand, terminated with buildings at some distance, castles, I presume, and of great antiquity. The roads are very good. being, as I suspect, the works of Julius Cæsar's army, for they still preserve, in many places, the appearance of a pavement in pretty good repair, and, if they were not so near home, might perhaps be as much admired as the Via Appia; there are at present several rivulets to be crossed, and which serve to enliven the view all around. The country is exceeding fruitful in ravens and such black cattle; but, not to tire you with my travels, I abruptly conclude.

Yours, &c.

August, 1738.

* Dr. Long, the master of Pembroke-Hall, at this time read lectures in experimental philosophy.

† All that follows, is a humorously hyperbolic description of the quadrangle of Peter-House.

XVII.

TO MR. WEST.

I AM coming away all so fast, and leaving behind me, without the least remorse, all the beauties of Sturbridge Fair. Its white bears may roar, its apes may wring their hands, and crocodiles cry their eyes out, all's one for that; I shall not once visit them, nor so much as take my leave. The university has published a severe edict against schismatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little procterlings to see its orders executed, being under mighty apprehensions lest *Henley and his gilt tub should come to the fair and seduce their young ones: but their pains are to small purpose, for lo, after all, he is not coming.

I am at this instant in the very agonies of leaving college, and would not wish the worst of my enemies a worse situation. If you knew the dust, the old boxes, the bedsteads, and tutors that are about my ears, you would look upon this letter as a great effort of my resolution and unconcernedness in the

* Orator Henley.

midst of evils. I fill up my paper with a loose sort of version of that scene in *Pastor Fido* that begins, *Care selve beati*.*

Sept. 1738.

XVIII.

FROM MR. WEST.

I THANK you again and again for your two last most agreeable letters. They could not have come more *à-propos*; I was without any books to divert me, and they supplied the want of every thing: I made them my classics in the country; they were my *Horace* and *Tibullus*—*Non ita loquor assentandi causâ, ut probe nôsti si me nôris, verum quia sic mea est sententia*. I am but just come to town, and, to show you my esteem of your favours, I venture to send you by the penny-post, to your father's, what you will find on the next page: I hope it will reach you soon after your arrival, your boxes out of the waggon, yourself out of the coach, and tutors out of your memory.

Adieu, we shall see one another, I hope, to-morrow.

* This Latin version is extremely elegiac, [but as it is only a version I do not insert it.]

ELEGIA.

Quod mihi tam gratæ misisti dona Camœnæ,
Qualia Mœnalius Pan Deus ipse velit,
Amplector te, Graie, et toto corde reposco,
Oh desiderium jam nimis usque meum !
Et mihi rura placent, et me quoque sæpe volentem
Duxerunt Dryades per sua prata Deæ ;
Sicubi lymp̃ha fugit liquido pede, sive virentem,
Magna decus nemoris, quercus opacat humum :
Illuc mane novo vagor, illuc vespere sero,
Et noto ut jacui gramine, nota cano.
Nec nostræ ignorant divinam Amaryllida silvæ :
Ah, si desit Amor, nil mihi rura placent.
Ille jugis habitat Deus, ille in vallibus imis,
Regnat et in Coelis, regnat et Oceano ;
Ille gregem taurosque domat ; sævique leonem
Seminis ; ille feros, ultus Adonin, apros :
Quin et fervet amore nemus, ramoque sub omni
Concentu tremulo plurima gaudet avis.
Duræ etiam in silvis agitant connubia plantæ,
Dura etiam et fertur saxa animasse Venus.
Durius et saxis, et robore durior ille est,
Sincero siquis pectore amare vetat :
Non illi in manibus sanctum deponere pignus,
Non illi arcanum cor aperire velim ;
Nescit amicitias, teneros qui nescit amores :
Ah ! si nulla Venus, nil mihi rura placent.
Me licet a patria longe in tellure juberent
Externa positum ducere Fata dies ;
Si vultus modo amatus adesset, non ego contra
Plorarem magnos voce querente Deos.

At dulci in gremio curarum oblivia ducens
 Nil cuperem præter posse placere meæ ;
 Nec bona fortune aspiciens, neque munera regum,
 Illa intra optarem brachia cara mori.

Sep. 17, 1738.

Mr. Gray continued at his father's house in Cornhill till the March following, in which interval Mr. Walpole, being disinclined to enter so early into parliament, prevailed on sir Robert Walpole to permit him to go abroad. and on Mr. Gray to be the companion of his travels. The correspondence is defective towards the end of his travels, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory ; the last places which Mr. Gray visited : a defect which was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr Walpole, and ended in their separation at Reggio. Mr. Gray went before him to Venice ; and staying there only till he could find means of returning to England, he made the best of his way home, repassing the Alps, and following almost the same route through France by which he had before gone to Italy.

XIX.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Amiens, April 1, N. S. 1739.

As we made but a very short journey to-day, and came to our inn early, I sit down to give you some account of our expedition. On the 29th (according to the style here) we left Dover at twelve at noon, and with a

pretty brisk gale, which pleased every body mighty well, except myself, who was extremely sick the whole time; we reached Calais by five: the weather changed, and it began to snow hard the minute we got into the harbour, where we took the boat, and soon landed. Calais is an exceeding old, but very pretty town, and we hardly saw any thing there that was not so new and so different from England, that it surprised us agreeably. We went the next morning to the great church, and were at high mass (it being Easter Monday). We saw also the Convent of the Capuchins, and the nuns of St. Dominic; with these last we held much conversation, especially with an English nun, a Mrs. Davis, of whose work I sent you, by the return of the packet, a letter-case to remember her by. In the afternoon we took a post-chaise (it still snowing very hard) for Boulogne, which was only eighteen miles further. This chaise is a strange sort of conveyance, of much greater use than beauty, resembling an ill-shaped chariot, only with the door opening before instead of the side; three horses draw it, one between the shafts, and the other two on each side, on one of which the postillion rides, and drives

too.* This vehicle will, upon occasion, go fourscore miles a day, but Mr. Walpole, being in no hurry, chooses to make easy journeys of it, and they are easy ones indeed; for the motion is much like that of a sedan; we go about six miles an hour, and commonly change horses at the end of it. It is true they are no very graceful steeds, but they go well, and through roads which they say are bad for France, but to me they seem gravel walks and bowling-greens; in short, it would be the finest travelling in the world, were it not for the inns, which are mostly terrible places indeed. But to describe our progress somewhat more regularly, we came into Boulogne when it was almost dark, and went out pretty early on Tuesday morning; so that all I can say about it is, that it is a large, old, fortified town, with more English in it than French. On Tuesday we were to go to Abbéville, seventeen leagues, or fifty-one short English miles; but by the way we dined at Montreuil, much to our hearts' content, on stinking mutton cutlets, addled eggs, and ditch water. Madame the hostess made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace, and a sack of linsey-woolsey. We supped

* This was before the introduction of post-chaises here, or it would not have appeared a circumstance worthy notice.

and lodged pretty well at Abbéville, and had time to see a little of it before we came out this morning. There are seventeen convents in it, out of which we saw the chapels of the Minims and the Carmelite nuns. We are now come further thirty miles to Amiens, the chief city of the province of Picardy. We have seen the cathedral, which is just what that of Canterbury must have been before the reformation. It is about the same size, a huge Gothic building, beset on the outside with thousands of small statues, and within adorned with beautiful painted windows, and a vast number of chapels, dressed out in all their finery of altar-pieces, embroidery, gilding, and marble. Over the high altar are preserved, in a very large wrought shrine of massy gold, the relics of St. Firmin, their patron saint. We went also to the chapels of the Jesuit, and Ursuline nuns, the latter of which is very richly adorned. To-morrow we shall lie at Clermont, and next day reach Paris. The country we have passed through hitherto has been flat, open, but agreeably diversified with villages, fields well-cultivated, and little rivers. On every hillock is a windmill, a crucifix, or a Virgin Mary dressed in flowers, and a sarcenet robe; one sees not many peo-

ple or carriages on the road; now and then indeed you meet a strolling friar, a countryman with his great muff, or a woman riding astride on a little ass; with short petticoats, and a great head-dress of blue wool. * * *

XX.

TO M R. WEST.

Paris, April 12, 1739.

ENFIN donc me voici à Paris. Mr. Walpole is gone out to supper at lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good supper; for these three days we have been here, have actually given me an aversion to eating in general. If hunger be the best sauce to meat, the French are certainly the worst cooks in the world; for what tables we have seen have been so delicately served, and so profusely, that, after rising from one of them, one imagines it impossible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad; mais n'importe, courage, allons! for if I wait till my head grow clear and settle a little, you may stay

long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two: they have not been disagreeable ones; through a fine, open country, admirable roads, and in an easy conveyance; the inns not absolutely intolerable, and images quite unusual presenting themselves on all hands. At Amiens we saw the fine cathedral, and eat *paté de perdix*; passed through the park of Chantilly by the duke of Bourbon's palace, which we only beheld as we passed; broke down at Lausarche; stopped at St. Denis, saw all the beautiful monuments of the kings of France, and the vast treasures of the abbey, rubies, and emeralds as big as small eggs, crucifixes and vases, crowns and reliquaires, of inestimable value; but of all their curiosities the thing the most to our tastes, and which they indeed do the justice to esteem the glory of their collection, was a vase of an entire onyx, measuring at least five inches over, three deep, and of great thickness. It is at least two thousand years old, the beauty of the stone and the sculpture upon it (representing the mysteries of Bacchus) beyond expression admirable; we have dreamed of it ever since. The jolly old Benedictine, that showed us the treasures had in his youth been ten years a soldier; he laugh-

ed at all the relics, was very full of stories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris, and were driving through the streets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, voilà Milors Holdernessee, Conway, and his brother; all stayed supper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here nobody ever sleeps; it is not the way. Next day go to dine at my lord Holdernessee's, there was the Abbé Prevôt, author of the Cleveland, and several other pieces much esteemed: the rest were English. At night we went to the Pandore; a spectacle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of machinery of three scenes. The first represents the chaos, and by degrees the separation of the elements: the second, the temple of Jupiter, and the giving of the box to Pandora: the third, the opening of the box, and all the mischiefs that ensued. An absurd design, but executed in the highest perfection, and that in one of the finest theatres in the world; it is the grande salle des machines in the palais des Tuilleries. Next day dined at lord Waldegrave's: then to the opera. Imagine to yourself for the drama four acts*

* The French opera has only three acts, but often a prologue on a different subject, which (as Mr. Walpole informs me, who saw it at the same time) was the case in this very representation.

entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on some little history, skilfully taken out of an ancient author, e g. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, &c. and with great address converted into a French piece of gallantry. For instance, that which I saw, called the Ballet de la Paix, had its first act built upon the story of Nireus. Homer having said that he was the handsomest man of his time, the poet, imagining such a one could not want a mistress, has given him one. These two come in and sing sentiment in lamentable strains, neither air nor recitative; only, to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance, or (to one's great sorrow) by a chorus that borders the stage from one end to the other, and screams, past all power of simile to represent. The second act was Baucis and Philemon. Baucis is a beautiful young shepherdess, and Philemon her swain. Jupiter falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; so it is all mighty well, and the chorus sing and dance the praises of Constancy. The two other acts were about Iphis and Ianthe, and the judgment of Paris. Imagine, I say, all this transacted by cracked voices, trilling divisions upon two notes and a half, accompanied by an orchestra of humstrums, and a

whole house more attentive than if Farinelli sung, and you will almost have formed a just notion of the thing. Our astonishment at their absurdity you can never conceive; we had enough to do to express it by screaming an hour louder than the whole *dramatis personæ*. We have also seen twice the *Comédie Française*; first, the *Mahomet Second*, a tragedy that has had a great run of late; and the thing itself does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond measure delightful. *Mademoiselle Gaussin* (*M. Voltaire's Zara*) has with a charming (though little) person the most pathetic tone of voice, the finest expression in her face, and most proper action imaginable. There is also a *Dufrêne*, who did the chief character, a handsome man and a prodigious fine actor. The second we saw was the *Philosophe marié*, and here they performed as well in comedy; there is a *Mademoiselle Quinault*, somewhat in *Mrs. Clive's* way, and a *Monsieur Grandval*, in the nature of *Wilks*, who is the genteelst thing in the world. There are several more would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not seen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is spent in seeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, &c. the quarter of which is

not yet exhausted. For my part, I could entertain myself this month merely with the common streets and the people in them. * * *

XXI.

TO MR. WEST.

Paris, May 22, 1739.

AFTER the little particulars aforesaid I should have proceeded to a journal of our transactions for this week past, should have carried you post from hence to Versailles, hurried you through the gardens to Trianon, back again to Paris, so away to Chantilly. But the fatigue is perhaps more than you can bear, and moreover I think I have reason to stomach your last piece of gravity. Supposing you were in your soberest mood I am sorry you should think me capable of ever being so dissip  , so evapor  , as not to be in a condition of relishing any thing you could say to me. And now, if you have a mind to make your peace with me, arouse ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exercise is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-

boots, and set out with me, last Saturday evening, for Versailles—and so at eight o'clock, passing through a road speckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and partridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itself to terminate the view; facing which, on each side of you, is placed a semicircle of very handsome buildings, which form the stables. These we will not enter into, because you know we are no jockies. Well! and is this the great front of Versailles? What a huge heap of littleness! it is composed, as it were, of three courts, all open to the eye at once, and gradually diminishing till you come to the royal apartments, which on this side present but half a dozen windows and a balcony. This last is all that can be called a front, for the rest is only great wings. The hue of all this mass is black, dirty red, and yellow; the first proceeding from stone changed by age; the second, from a mixture of brick; and the last, from a profusion of tarnished gilding. You cannot see a more disagreeable tout-ensemble; and, to finish the matter, it is all stuck over in many places with small busts of a tawny hue between every two windows.

We pass through this to go into the garden, and here the case is indeed altered; nothing can be vaster and more magnificent than the back front; before it a very spacious terrace spreads itself, adorned with two large basins; these are bordered and lined (as most of the others) with white marble, with handsome statues of bronze reclined on their edges. From hence you descend a huge flight of steps into a semi-circle formed by woods, that are cut all round into niches, which are filled with beautiful copies of all the famous antique statues in white marble. Just in the midst is the basin of Latona; she and her children are standing on the top of a rock in the middle, on the sides of which are the peasants, some half, some totally changed into frogs, all which throw out water at her in great plenty. From this place runs on the great alley, which brings you into a complete round, where is the basin of Apollo, the biggest in the gardens. He is rising in his car out of the water, surrounded by nymphs and tritons; all in bronze, and finely executed; and these, as they play, raise a perfect storm about him: beyond this is the great canal, a prodigious long piece of water, that terminates the whole. All this you have at one coup d'œil

in entering the garden, which is truly great. I cannot say as much of the general taste of the place; every thing you behold savours too much of art; all is forced, all is constrained about you; statues and vases sowed every where without distinction; sugar-loaves and minced-pies of yew; scrawl-work of box, and little squirting jets-d'eau, besides a great sameness in the walks, cannot help striking one at first sight, not to mention the silliest of labyrinths, and all Æsop's fables in water; since these were designed in usum Delphini only. Here then we walk by moon-light, and hear the ladies and the night-ingles sing. Next morning, being Whitsunday, make ready to go to the Installation of nine knights du Saint Esprit, Cambis is one:* high mass celebrated with music, great crowd, much incense, king, queen, dauphin, mesdames, cardinals and court! knights arrayed by his majesty; réverences before the altar, not bows, but curtsies; stiff hams; much tittering among the ladies; trumpets, kettle-drums, and fifes. My dear West, I am vastly delighted with Trianon, all of us with Chantilly; if you would know why, you

*The Comte de Cambis was lately returned from his Embassy in England.

must have patience, for I can hold my pen no longer, except to tell you that I saw Britannicus last night; all the characters, particularly Agrippina and Nero, done to perfection; to-morrow Phædra and Hippolytus. We are making you a little bundle of petite pieces; there is nothing in them, but they are acting at present; there are two Crebillon's Letters, and Amusemens sur le langage des Bêtes, said to be of one Bougeant, a Jesuit; they are both esteemed, and lately come out. This day se'nuight we go to Rheims.

XXII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rheims, June 21, N. S. 1739.

WE have now been settled almost three weeks in this city, which is more considerable upon account of its size and antiquity, than from the number of its inhabitants, or any advantages of commerce. There is little in it worth a stranger's curiosity, besides the cathedral church, which is a vast Gothic building of a surprising beauty and lightness, all covered over with a profusion

of little statues, and other ornaments. It is here the kings of France are crowned by the archbishop of Rheims, who is the first peer, and the primate of the kingdom. The holy vessel made use of on that occasion, which contains the oil, is kept in the church of St. Nicasius hard by, and is believed to have been brought by an angel from heaven at the coronation of Clovis, the first Christian king. The streets in general have but a melancholy aspect, the houses all old; the public walks run along the side of a great moat under the ramparts, where one hears a continual croaking of frogs; the country round about is one great plain covered with vines, which at this time of the year afford no very pleasing prospect, as being not above a foot high. What pleasures the place denies to the sight, it makes up to the palate; since you have nothing to drink but the best champagne in the world, and all sorts of provisions equally good. As to other pleasures, there is not that freedom of conversation among the people of fashion here, that one sees in other parts of France; for though they are not very numerous in this place, and consequently must live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my

lord Conway had spent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were soon introduced into all their assemblies.. As soon as you enter, the lady of the house presents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you sit down, and play forty deals without intermission, excepting one quarter of an hour, when every body rises to eat of what they call the gouter, which supplies the place of our tea, and is a service of wine, fruits, cream, sweet-meats, crawfish, and cheese. People take what they like, and sit down again to play; after that, they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their separate habitations. Very seldom any suppers or dinners are given; and this is the manner they live among one another; not so much out of any aversion they have to pleasure, as out of a sort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is sure they do not hate gayety any more than the rest of their country-people, and can enter into diversions, that are once proposed, with a good grace enough; for instance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the

best fashion here, at a garden in the town, to walk; when one of the ladies bethought herself of asking, why should not we sup here? Immediately the cloth was laid by the side of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant supper served up: after which another said, Come, let us sing; and directly began herself. From singing we insensibly fell to dancing, and singing in a round: when somebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company of them was ordered. Minuets were begun in the open air, and then some country-dances, which held till four o'clock next morning; at which hour the gayest lady there proposed, that such as were weary should get into their coaches, and the rest of them should dance before them with the music in the van; and in this manner we paraded through all the principal streets of the city and waked every body in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a custom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the same manner next week, but the women did not come into it; so I believe it will drop, and they will return to their dull cards, and usual formalities. We are not to stay above a month longer here, and shall then go to Dijon, the chief city of Burgundy, a very splendid and a very gay town; at least such is the present design.

XXIII.

TO HIS FATHER.

Dijon, Friday, Sept. 11, N. S. 1790.

WE have made three short days' journey of it from Rheims hither, where we arrived the night before last. The road we have passed through has been extremely agreeable: it runs through the most fertile part of Champagne by the side of the river Marne, with a chain of hills on each hand at some distance, entirely covered with woods and vineyards, and every now and then the ruins of some old castle on their tops: we lay at St. Dizier the first night, and at Langres the second, and got hither the next evening time enough to have a full view of this city in entering it. It lies in a very extensive plain covered with vines and corn, and consequently is plentifully supplied with both. I need not tell you that it is the chief city of Burgundy, nor that it is of great antiquity; considering which one should imagine it ought to be larger than one finds it. However, what it wants in extent is made up in beauty and cleanliness, and in rich convents and churches, most of which we

have seen. The palace of the States is a magnificent new building, where the duke of Bourbon is lodged when he comes every three years to hold that assembly, as governor of the province. A quarter of a mile out of the town is a famous abbey of Carthusians, which we are just returned from seeing. In their chapel are the tombs of the ancient dukes of Burgundy, that were so powerful, till, at the death of Charles the Bold, the last of them, this part of his dominions was united by Louis XI. to the crown of France. To-morrow we are to pay a visit to the abbot of the Cistercians, who lives a few leagues off, and who uses to receive all strangers with great civility; his abbey is one of the richest in the kingdom; he keeps open house always, and lives with great magnificence. We have seen enough of this town already, to make us regret the time we spent at Rheims; it is full of people of condition, who seem to form a much more agreeable society than we found in Champagne; but as we shall stay here but two or three days longer, it is not worth while to be introduced into their houses. On Monday or Tuesday we are to set out for Lyons, which is two days' journey distant, and from thence you shall hear again from me.

XXIV.

TO MR. WEST.

Lyons, Sept. 18, N. S. 1739.

SCAVEZ vous bien, mon cher ami, que je vous hais, que je vous deteste? voila des termes un peu fortes; and that will save me, upon a just computation, a page of paper and six drops of ink; which, if I confined myself to reproaches of a more moderate nature, I should be obliged to employ in using you according to your deserts. What! to let any body reside three months at Rheims, and write but once to them? Please to consult Tully de Amicit. page 5, line 25, and you will find it said in express terms, "Ad amicum inter Remos relegatum mense uno quinquies scriptum esto;" nothing more plain, or less liable to false interpretations. Now because, I suppose, it will give you pain to know we are in being, I take this opportunity to tell you that we are at the ancient and celebrated Lugdunum, a city situated upon the confluence of the Rhône and Saône (Arar, I should say) two people, who, though of tempers extremely unlike, think fit to join hands here, and make

a little party to travel to the Mediterranean in company: the lady comes gliding along through the fruitful plains of Burgundy, *incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non possit*; the gentleman runs all rough and roaring down from the mountains of Switzerland to meet her; and with all her soft airs she likes him never the worse: she goes through the middle of the city in state, and he passes incog. without the walls, but waits for her a little below. The houses here are so high, and the streets so narrow, as would be sufficient to render Lyons the dimmallest place in the world; but the number of people, and the face of commerce diffused about it, are, at least, as sufficient to make it the liveliest. Between these two sufficiencies, you will be in doubt what to think of it; so we shall leave the city, and proceed to its environs, which are beautiful beyond expression: it is surrounded with mountains, and those mountains all be-dropped and bespeckled with houses, gardens, and plantations of the rich Bourgeois, who have from thence a prospect of the city in the vale below on one hand, on the other the rich plains of the Lyonnois, with the rivers winding among them, and the Alps, with the mountains of Dauphiné, to

bound the view. All yesterday morning we were busied in climbing up Mount Fourviere, where the ancient city stood perched at such a height, that nothing but the hopes of gain could certainly ever persuade their neighbours to pay them a visit. Here are the ruins of the emperors' palaces, that resided here, that is to say, Augustus and Severus: they consist in nothing but great masses of old wall, that have only their quality to make them respected. In a vineyard of the Minims are remains of a theatre; the fathers, whom they belong to, hold them in no esteem at all, and would have showed us their sacristy and chapel instead of them. The Ursuline Nuns have in their garden some Roman baths, but we having the misfortune to be men, and heretics, they did not think proper to admit us. Hard by are eight arches of a most magnificent aqueduct, said to be erected by Antony, when his legions were quartered here: there are many other parts of it dispersed up and down the country, for it brought the water from a river many leagues off in La Forez. Here are remains too of Agrippa's seven great roads which met at Lyons; in some places they lie twelve feet deep in the ground. In short, a thousand matters that you shall

not know, till you give me a description of the Pais de Tombridge, and the effect its waters have upon you.

XXV.

FROM MR. WEST.

Temple, Sept. 28, 1739.

If wishes could turn to realities, I would fling down my law books, and sup with you to-night. But, alas! here I am doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleasures which a gay climate can afford. It is out of the power of my heart to envy your good fortune, yet I cannot help indulging a few natural desires; as for example, to take a walk with you on the banks of the Rhône, and to be climbing up mount Fourviere;

*Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari :
Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt.*

However, so long as I am not deprived of your correspondence, so long shall I always find some pleasure in being at home. And, setting all vain curiosity aside, when the fit is over, and my reason begins to come to

herself, I have several other powerful motives which might easily cure me of my restless inclinations. Amongst these, my mother's ill state of health is not the least, which was the reason of our going to Tunbridge; so that you cannot expect much description or amusement from thence. Nor indeed is there much room for either; for all diversions there may be reduced to two articles, gaming and going to church. They were pleased to publish certain Tunbrigiana this season; but such ana! I believe there were never so many vile little verses put together before. So much for Tunbridge. London affords me as little to say. What! so huge a town as London? Yes, consider only how I live in that town. I never go into the gay or high world, and consequently receive nothing from thence to brighten my imagination. The busy world I leave to the busy; and am resolved never to talk politics till I can act at the same time. To tell old stories, or prate of old books, seems a little musty; and toujours chapon bouilli, won't do. However, for want of better fare, take another little mouthful of my poetry.

*O mea jucunda comes quietis !
Quae fere aegrotum solita es levare*

Pectus, et sensim, ah ! nimis ingruentos
Fallere curas :

Quid canes ? quanto Lyra die furore
Gestias, quando hac reducem sodalem
Glauciam* gaudere simul videbis
Meque sub umbra ?

XXVI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Lyons, Oct. 13, N. S. 1739.

It is now almost five weeks since I left Dijon, one of the gayest and most agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons, its reverse in all these particulars. It is the second in the kingdom in bigness and rank; the streets excessively narrow and nasty; the houses immensely high and large; (that, for instance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five stories); it swarms with inhabitants like Paris itself, but chiefly a mercantile people, too much given up to commerce to think of their own, much less of a stranger's diversions. We have no acquaintance in the town,*

* He gives Mr. Gray the name of Glaucias frequently in his Latin verse, as Mr. Gray calls him Favonius.

but such English as happen to be passing through here, in their way to Italy and the south, which at present happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight since we set out from hence upon a little excursion to Geneva. We took the longest road, which lies through Savoy, on purpose to see a famous monastery, called the Grande Chartreuse, and had no reason to think our time lost. After having travelled seven days very slow (for we did not change horses, it being impossible for a chaise to go post in these roads) we arrived at a little village among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horses, who are used to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuse. It is six miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not six feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine-trees hanging over head; on the other a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic,

and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld. Add to this the strange views made by the crags and cliffs on the other hand; the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impossible to describe; you will conclude we had no occasion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno chose to retire to, and upon its very top founded the afore-said convent, which is the superior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers, who are commissioned to entertain strangers (for the rest must neither speak one to another, nor to any one else), received us very kindly; and set before us a repast of dried fish, eggs, butter, and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They pressed us to spend the night there, and to stay some days with them; but this we could not do, so they led us about their house, which is, you must think, like a little city; for there are 100 fathers, besides 300 servants, that make their clothes, grind their corn, press their wine, and do every thing among themselves. The whole is quite orderly and simple; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency, and the strange situation, more than supply the place of it.

In the evening we descended by the same way, passing through many clouds that were then forming themselves on the mountain's side. Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the duchy, and residence of the king of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and insignificant appearance; we lay at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy; the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to say any thing about it, nor of our solitary journey back again. * * *

XXVII.

TO HIS FATHER.

Lyons, Oct. 25, N. S. 1739.

In my last I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva: I have only to add, that we stayed about a week, in order to see Mr. Conway settled there. I do not wonder so many English choose it for their residence; the city is very small, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is sur

rounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air; which, joined to the happy, lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact discipline always as strictly observed as in time of war, makes the little republic appear a match for a much greater power; though perhaps Geneva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent with Windsor and its two parks. To one that has passed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more striking than the contrast, as soon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which separates it from the king of Sardinia's dominions; on the other side of it lies a country naturally, indeed, fine and fertile; but you meet with nothing in it but meager, ragged, bare-footed peasants, with their children, in extreme misery and nastiness: and even of these no great numbers. You no sooner have crossed the stream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more; not a beggar, hardly a discontented face to be seen; numerous, and well-dressed people swarming on the ramparts; drums beating, soldiers, well-clothed and armed, exercising; and folks, with business in their looks, hurrying to and fro; all contribute to make any person, who is not blind, sensible what a difference there

is between the two governments, that are the causes of one view and the other. The beautiful lake, at one end of which the town is situated; its extent; the several states that border upon it; and all its pleasures, are too well known for me to mention them. We sailed upon it as far as the dominions of Geneva extend, that is, about two leagues and a half on each side; and landed at several of the little houses of pleasure that the inhabitants have built all about it, who received us with much politeness. The same night we eat part of a trout, taken in the lake, that weighed thirty-seven pounds: as great a monster as it appeared to us, it was esteemed there nothing extraordinary, and they assured us, it was not uncommon to catch them of fifty pounds: they are dressed here, and sent post to Paris upon some great occasions; nay, even to Madrid, as we were told. The road we returned through was not the same we came by; we crossed the Rhône at Seyssel, and passed for three days among the mountains of Bugey, without meeting with any thing new; at last we came out into the plains of La Bresse, and so to Lyons again. Sir Robert has written to Mr. Walpole, to desire he would go to Italy, which he has resolved to do; so that all the scheme of

spending the winter in the south of France is laid aside, and we are to pass it in a much finer country. You may imagine I am not sorry to have this opportunity of seeing the place in the world that best deserves it: besides, as the pope, who is eighty-eight, and has been lately at the point of death, cannot probably last a great while, perhaps we may have the fortune to be present at the election of a new one, when Rome will be in all its glory. Friday next we certainly begin our journey; in two days we shall come to the foot of the Alps, and six more we shall be in passing them. Even here the winter is begun; what then must it be among those vast snowy mountains where it is hardly ever summer? We are, however, as well armed as possible against the cold, with muffs, hoods, and masks of beaver, fur-boots, and bear skins. When we arrive at Turin, we shall rest after the fatigues of the journey. * * *

XXVIII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Turin, Nov. 7, N. S. 1739.

I AM this night arrived here, and have just

sat down to rest me after eight days' tiresome journey: For the three first we had the same road we before passed through to go to Geneva; the fourth we turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the side of the river Arc, which works itself a passage, with great difficulty and a mighty noise, among vast quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was so far advanced, as in great measure to spoil the beauty of the prospect; however, there was still somewhat fine remaining amidst the savageness and horror of the place: The sixth we began to go up several of these mountains; and as we were passing one, met with an odd accident enough: Mr. Walpole had a little fat black spaniel, that he was very fond of, which he sometimes used to set down, and let it run by the chaise side. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at most; on one side was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vast precipice; it was noon-day, and the sun shone bright, when all of a sudden, from the wood-side, (which was as steep upwards as the other part was downwards) out rush-

ed a great wolf, came close to the head of the horses, seized the dog by the throat, and rushed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in less than a quarter of a minute; we all saw it, and yet the servants had not time to draw their pistols, or do any thing to save the dog. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horses; chaise, and we, and all must inevitably have tumbled above fifty fathoms perpendicular down the precipice. The seventh we came to Lane-bourgh, the last town in Savoy; it lies at the foot of the famous Mount Cenis, which is so situated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaise was forced to be pulled to pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules: We ourselves were wrapped up in our furs, and seated upon a sort of matted chair without legs, which is carried upon poles in the manner of a bier, and so began to ascend by the help of eight men. It was six miles to the top, where a plain opens itself about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep snow, and in the midst of that a great lake of unfathomable depth, from whence a river takes its rise, and tumbles over monstrous rocks quite down the other side of

the mountain. The descent is six miles more, but infinitely more steep than the going up; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness in places where none but they could go three paces without falling. The immensity of the precipices, the roaring of the river and torrents that run into it, the huge crags covered with ice and snow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impossible to conceive without seeing them; and though we had heard many strange descriptions of the scene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and stopped a little while at La Ferriere, a small village about three quarters of the way down, but still among the clouds, where we began to hear a new language spoken round about us; at last we got quite down, went through the Pas de Suse, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortresses, and lay at Bossolens: Next evening, through a fine avenue of nine miles in length, as straight as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the principality,

and the residence of the king of Sardinia.*** We shall stay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days' journey, to go post.

I am, &c.

XXIX.

TO MR. WEST.

Turin, Nov. 16, N. S. 1739.

AFTER eight days' journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin—you approach it by a handsome avenue of nine miles long, and quite straight. The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragons, called Douaniers, who mumbled us for some time. The city is not large, as being a place of strength, and consequently confined within its fortifications; it has many beauties and some faults; among the first are streets all laid out by the line, regu-

*** That part of the letter here omitted, contained only a description of the city; which, as Mr. Gray has given it to Mr. West in the following letter, and that in a more lively manner, I thought it unnecessary to insert; a liberty I have taken in other parts of this correspondence, in order to avoid repetitions.

lar uniform buildings, fine walks that surround the whole, and in general a good lively clean appearance: but the houses are of brick, plastered, which is apt to want repairing; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn; and every thing very slight, which is apt to tumble down. There is an excellent opera, but it is only in the carnival: Balls every night, but only in the carnival: Masquerades too, but only in the carnival. This carnival lasts only from Christmas to Lent; one half of the remaining part of the year is passed in remembering the last, the other in expecting the future carnival. We cannot well subsist upon such slender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian comedy, and a puppet show, called *Rappresentazione d'un' anima dannata*, which, I think, are all the present diversions of the place; except the Marquise de Caillaud's *conversazione*, where one goes to see people play at ombre and taroc, a game with 72 cards all painted with suns, and moons, and devils, and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court; the family are at present at a country palace, called *La Venerie*. The palace here in town is the very quintessence of gilding and looking glass; inlaid floors, carved panels, and painting,

wherever they could stick a brush. I own I have not, as yet, any where met with those grand and simple works of art, that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for: But those of nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining. Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day: You have death perpetually before your eyes; only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frightening it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to choose such a situation for his retirement; and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloïse were not forgot upon this occasion: If I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees; *il me semble, que j'ai vu ce chien de visage là quelque part*. You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice,

but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was. The week we have since passed among the Alps, has not equalled the single day upon that mountain, because the winter was rather too far advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the savage rudeness of the view is inconceivable without seeing it: I reckoned, in one day, thirteen cascades, the least of which was, I dare say, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaise with me, and beheld his "*Nives cœlo prope immixtæ, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora jumentaque torrida frigore, homines intonsi et inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu; omnia confragosa, præruptaque.*" The creatures that inhabit them are, in all respects, below humanity; and most of them, especially women, have the tumidum guttur, which they call goscia. Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far; and its horrors were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine

monsters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their stock of provisions and firing, and so are buried in their hut for a month or two under the snow. When we were down it, and got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find "*Apricos quosdam colles, rivosque prope silvas, et jam humano cultu digniora loca.*" I read Silius Italicus too, for the first time; and wished for you, according to custom.—We set out for Genoa in two days' time.

XXX.

TO MR. WEST.

Genoa, Nov. 21, 1739.

*Horridos tractus, Boreæque linquens**Begna Taurini fera, molliorem**Advehor brumam, Genuseque amantes**Litora soles.*

At least, if they do not, they have a very ill taste; for I never beheld any thing more amiable: Only figure to yourself a vast semicircular basin, full of fine blue sea, and vessels of all sorts and sizes, some sailing out, some coming in, and others at anchor;

and all round it palaces and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens, and marble terraces full of orange and cypress trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which altogether compose the grandest of theatres.—This is the first coup d'œil, and is almost all I am yet able to give you an account of, for we arrived late last night. To-day was, luckily, a great festival, and in the morning we resorted to the church of the Madonna delle Vigne, to put up our little orisons ; (I believe I forgot to tell you, that we have been sometime converts to the holy catholic church) : we found our lady richly dressed out, with a crown of diamonds on her own head, another upon the child's, and a constellation of wax lights burning before them : Shortly after came the doge, in his robes of crimson damask, and a cap of the same, followed by the senate in black. Upon his approach, began a fine concert of music, and among the rest two eunuchs' voices that were a perfect feast to ears that had heard nothing but French operas for a year. We listened to this, and breathed nothing but incense for two hours. The doge is a very tall, lean, stately, old figure, called Constantino Balbi ; and the senate seem to have been made

upon the same model.—They said their prayers, and heard an absurd white friar preach, with equal devotion. After this we went to the Annonciata, a church built by the family Lomellini, and belonging to it; which is, indeed, a most stately structure; the inside wholly marble of various kinds, except where gold and painting take its place.—From hence to the Palazzo Doria. I should make you sick of marble, if I told you how it was lavished here upon the porticoes, the ballustrades, and terraces, the lowest of which extends quite to the sea. The inside is by no means answerable to the outward magnificence; the furniture seems to be as old as the founder of the family.* Their great embossed silver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at sea; how he entertained the emperor Charles, and how he refused the sovereignty of the commonwealth when it was offered him; the rest is old-fashioned velvet chairs, and Gothic tapestry. The rest of the day has been spent, much to our hearts' content, in cursing French music and architecture, and in singing the praises of Italy. We find this place so very fine, that we are in fear

* The famous Andrea Doria.

of finding nothing finer.—We are fallen in love with the Mediterranean sea, and hold your lakes and your rivers in vast contempt. This is

“The happy country where huge lemons grow,”

as Waller says ; and I am sorry to think of leaving it in a week for Parma, although it be

The happy country where huge cheeses grow.

XXXI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Bologna, Dec. 9, N. S. 1739.

Our journey hither has taken up much less time than I expected. We left Genoa (a charming place, and one that deserved a longer stay) the week before last ; crossed the mountains, and lay that night at Tortona, the next at St. Giovanni, and the morning after came to Piacenza. That city, (though the capital of a duchy) made so frippery an appearance, that instead of spending some days there, as had been intended, we only dined, and went on to

Parma ; stayed there all the following day, which was passed in visiting the famous works of Corregio in the Dome, and other churches.—The fine gallery of pictures, that once belonged to the dukes of Parma, is no more here ; the king of Naples has carried it all thither, and the city had not merit enough to detain us any longer, so we proceeded through Reggio to Modena ; this, though the residence of its duke, is an ill-built melancholy place, all of brick, as are most of the towns in this part of Lombardy : He himself lives in a private manner, with very little appearance of a court about him ; he has one of the noblest collections of paintings in the world, which entertained us extremely well the rest of that day and a part of the next ; and in the afternoon we came to Bologna : so now you may wish us joy of being in the dominions of his Holiness. This is a populous city, and of great extent : All the streets have porticoes on both sides, such as surround a part of Covent-Garden, a great relief in summer-time in such a climate ; and from one of the principal gates to a church of the Virgin, (where is a wonder-working picture, at three miles distance) runs a corridor of the same sort, lately finished, and, indeed,

a most extraordinary performance. The churches here are more remarkable for their paintings than architecture, being mostly old structures of brick ; but the palaces are numerous, and fine enough to supply us with somewhat worth seeing from morning till night. The country of Lombardy, hitherto, is one of the most beautiful imaginable ; the roads broad, and exactly straight, and on either hand vast plantations of trees, chiefly mulberries and olives, and not a tree without a vine twining about it and spreading among its branches. This scene, indeed, which must be the most lovely in the world during the proper season, is at present all deformed by the winter, which here is rigorous enough for the time it lasts ; but one still sees the skeleton of a charming place, and reaps the benefit of its product ; for the fruits and provisions are admirable : in short, you find every thing that luxury can desire, in perfection. We have now been here a week, and shall stay some little time longer. We are at the foot of the Apennine mountains ; it will take up three days to cross them, and then we shall come to Florence, where we shall pass the Christmas. Till then we must remain in a state of ignorance as to what is doing in England,

for our letters are to meet us there : If I do not find four or five from you alone, I shall wonder.

XXXII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Dec. 19, N. S. 1739.

WE spent twelve days at Bologna, chiefly (as most travellers do) in seeing sights ; for as we knew no mortal there, and as it is no easy matter to get admission into any Italian house, without very particular recommendations, we could see no company but in public places ; and there are none in that city but the churches. We saw, therefore, churches, palaces, and pictures from morning to night ; and the 15th of this month set out for Florence, and began to cross the Apennine mountains ; we travelled among and upon them all that day, and, as it was but indifferent weather, were commonly in the middle of thick clouds, that utterly deprived us of a sight of their beauties : For this vast chain of hills has its beauties, and all the valleys are cultivated ; even the mountains themselves are many of them so

within a little of their very tops. They are not so horrid as the Alps, though pretty near as high ; and the whole road is admirably well kept, and paved throughout, which is a length of fourscore miles, and more. We left the pope's dominions, and lay that night in those of the grand duke of Fiorenzuola, a paltry little town, at the foot of mount Giogo, which is the highest of them all. Next morning we went up it ; the post-house is upon its very top, and usually involved in clouds, or half-buried in the snow. Indeed there was none of the last at the time we were there, but it was still a dismal habitation. The descent is most excessively steep, and the turnings very short and frequent ; however, we performed it without any danger, and in coming down could dimly discover Florence, and the beautiful plain about it, through the mists ; but enough to convince us, it must be one of the noblest prospects upon earth in summer. That afternoon we got thither : and Mr. Mann,* the resident, had sent his servant to meet us at the gates, and conduct us to his house. He is the best and most obliging person in the world. The next

* Afterwards Sir Horace Mann.

night we were introduced at the prince of Craon's assembly (he has the chief power here in the grand duke's absence.)—The princess, and he, were extremely civil to the name of Walpole, so we were asked to stay supper, which is as much as to say, you may come and sup here whenever you please; for after the first invitation this is always understood. We have also been at the countess Suarez's, a favourite of the late duke, and one that gives the first movement to every thing gay that is going forward here. The news is every day expected from Vienna of the great duchess's delivery; if it be a boy, here will be all sorts of balls, masquerades, operas, and illuminations; if not, we must wait for the carnival, when all those things come of course. In the mean time, it is impossible to want entertainment; the famous gallery, alone, is an amusement for months: we commonly pass two or three hours every morning in it, and one has perfect leisure to consider all its beauties. You know it contains many hundred antique statues, such as the whole world cannot match, besides the vast collection of paintings, medals, and precious stones, such as no other prince was ever master of; in short, all that the rich and powerful

house of Medicis has in so many years got together.* And besides this city abounds with so many palaces and churches, that you can hardly place yourself any where without having some fine one in view, or at least some statue or fountain, magnificently adorned; these undoubtedly are far more numerous than Genoa can pretend to; yet, in its general appearance, I cannot think that Florence equals it in beauty. Mr. Walpole is just come from being presented to the electress palatine dowager; she is a sister of the late great duke's; a stately old lady, that never goes out but to church, and then she has guards, and eight horses to her coach. She received him with much ceremony, standing under a huge black canopy, and, after a few minutes' talking, she assured him of her good will, and dismissed him: She never sees any body but thus in form; and so she passes her life, †poor woman! * * *

* He catalogued and made occasional short remarks on the pictures, &c. which he saw here, as well as at other places, many of which are in my possession, but it would have swelled this work too much if I had inserted them.

† Persons of very high rank, and withal very good sense, will only feel the pathos of this exclamation.

XXXIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, Jan. 18, 1740.

I THINK I have not yet told you how we left that charming place Genoa, how we crossed a mountain all of green marble, called Buchetto; how we came to Tortona, and waded through the mud to come to Castel St. Giovanni, and there eat mustard and sugar with a dish of crows' gizzards: Secondly, how we passed the famous plains

*Qua Trebie glaucas salices intersecat unda,
Arvaque Romanis nobilitata malis.
Visus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere,
Et suspirantes ducere moestus aquas;
Maurorumque ala, et nigrae increbrescere turmas,
Et pulsa Ausonidum ripa sonare fuga.*

Nor, thirdly, how we passed through Piacenza, Parma, Modena, entered the territories of the pope; stayed twelve days at Bologna; crossed the Apennines, and afterwards arrived at Florence. None of these things have I told you, nor do I intend to tell you, till you ask me some questions concerning them. No not even of Florence itself,

except that it is as fine as possible, and has every thing in it that can bless the eyes. But, before I enter into particulars, you must make your peace both with me and the Venus de Medicis, who, let me tell you, is highly and justly offended at you for not inquiring, long before this, concerning her symmetry and proportions. * * *

XXXIV.

FROM MR. WEST.

ELEGIA.*

Ergo desidiæ videor tibi crimine dignus ;
 Et merito : victas do tibi sponæ manus.
 Arguor et veteres nimium contemnere Musas,
 Irata et nobis est Medicea Venus.
 Mene igitur statuas et inania saxa vereri !
 Stultule ! marmorea quid mihi cum Venere ?
 Hic veræ, hic vivæ Venereæ, et mille per urbem,
 Quarum nulla quæst non placuisse Jovi.
 Cedite Romanæ formosæ, et cedite Graiæ,
 Sintque oblita Helensæ nomen et Hermionæ !
 Et, quascunque refert ætas vetus, Heroinæ :
 Unus honor nostris jam venit Angliasin.
 Oh quales vultus, Oh quantum numen ocellis !

* The letter which accompanied this little elegy is not extant. Probably it was only enclosed in one to Mr. Walpole.

I nunc et Tuscas improbe confer opas.
 Ne tamen hæc obtusa nimis præguardia credas,
 Neu me adeo nulla Pallade progenitum :
 Testor Pieridumque umbas et flumina Pindi,
 Me quoque Calliopes semper amasse choros ;
 Et dudum Ausonias urbes, et visere Graias
 Cura est, ingenio si licet ire meo :
 Sive est Phidiacum marmor, seu Mentoris æra,
 Seu paries Coo nobilis e calanag
 Nec minus artificum magna argumenta recentum
 Romanique decus nominis et Veneti :
 Qua Furor et Mavors et sævo in marmore vultus,
 Quaque et formoso mollior ære Venus ;
 Quaque loquax spirat fœcus, vivique labores,
 Et quicquid calamo dulcius ausa manus :
 Hic nemora, et sola mœrens Melibœus in umbra,
 Lymphaque muscoso prœliens lapide ;
 Illie majus opus, faciesque in pariete major
 Exurgens, Divum et numina Coelicolum.
 O vos felices, quibus hæc cognoscere fas est,
 Et tota Italia, qua patet usque, frui !
 Nulla dies vobis est injucunda, nec usquam
 Noritis quid sit tempora amara pati.

XXXV.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, March 19, 1746.

THE pope* is at last dead, and we are to set out for Rome on Monday next. The con-

* Clement the Twelfth.

clave is still sitting there, and likely to continue so some time longer, as the two French cardinals are but just arrived, and the German ones are still expected. It agrees mighty ill with those that remain enclosed: Ottoboni is already dead of an apoplexy; Altieri and several others are said to be dying, or very bad: yet it is not expected to break up till after Easter. We shall lie at Sienna the first night, spend a day there, and in two more get to Rome. One begins to see in this country the first promises of an Italian spring, clear unclouded skies, and warm suns, such as are not often felt in England; yet, for your sake, I hope at present you have your proportion of them, and that all your frosts, and snows, and short-breaths are, by this time, utterly vanished. I have nothing new or particular to inform you of; and, if you see things at home go on much in their old course, you must not imagine them more various abroad. The diversions of a Florentine Lent are composed of a sermon in the morning, full of hell and the devil; a dinner at noon, full of fish and meager diet; and, in the evening, what is called a conversazione, a sort of assembly at the principal people's houses, full of I cannot tell what: Besides this, there is twice a week a very grand concert. * * *

XXXVI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 2, N. S. 1746.

THIS is the third day since we came to Rome, but the first hour I have had to write to you in. The journey from Florence cost us four days, one of which was spent at Sienna, an agreeable, clean, old city, of no great magnificence or extent; but in a fine situation, and good air. What it has most considerable is its cathedral, a huge pile of marble, black and white laid alternately, and laboured with a Gothic niceness and delicacy in the old-fashioned way. Within too are some paintings and sculpture of considerable hands. The sight of this, and some collections that were showed us in private houses, were a sufficient employment for the little time we were to pass there; and the next morning we set forward on our journey through a country very oddly composed; for some miles you have a continual scene of little mountains cultivated from top to bottom with rows of olive trees, or else elms, each of which has its vine twining about it, and mixing with the branches; and corn

sown between all the ranks. This, diversified with numerous small houses and convents, makes the most agreeable prospect in the world: But, all of a sudden, it alters to black barren hills, as far as the eye can reach, that seem never to have been capable of culture, and are as ugly as useless. Such is the country for some time before one comes to Mount Radicofani, a terrible black hill, on the top of which we were to lodge that night. It is very high, and difficult of ascent; and at the foot of it we were much embarrassed by the fall of one of the poor horses that drew us. This accident obliged another chaise, which was coming down, to stop also; and out of it peeped a figure in a red cloak, with a handkerchief tied round its head, which, by its voice and mien, seemed a fat old woman; but upon its getting out, appeared to be Senesino, who was returning from Naples to Sienna, the place of his birth and residence. On the highest part of the mountain is an old fortress, and near it a house built by one of the grand dukes for a hunting-seat, but now converted into an inn: It is the shell of a large fabric, but such an inside, such chambers, and accommodations, that your cellar is a palace in comparison; and your cat sups and lies much

better than we did; for, it being a saint's eve, there was nothing but eggs. We devoured our meager fare; and, after stopping up the windows with the quilts, were obliged to lie upon the straw beds in our clothes. Such are the conveniences in a road, that is, as it were, the great thoroughfare of all the world. Just on the other side of this mountain, at Ponte Centino, one enters the patrimony of the church; a most delicious country, but thinly inhabited. That night brought us to Viterbo, a city of a more lively appearance than any we had lately met with; the houses have glass windows, which is not very usual here; and most of the streets are terminated by a handsome fountain. Here we had the pleasure of breaking our fast on the leg of an old hare and some broiled crows. Next morning, in descending Mount Viterbo, we first discovered (though at near thirty miles distance) the cupola of St. Peter's, and a little after began to enter on an old Roman pavement, with now and then a ruined tower, or a sepulchre on each hand. We now had a clear view of the city, though not to the best advantage, as coming along a plain quite upon a level with it; however, it appeared very vast, and surrounded with magnificent villas and gardens. We soon after

crossed the Tiber, a river that ancient Rome made more considerable than any merit of its own could have done: However, it is not contemptibly small, but a good handsome stream; very deep, yet somewhat of a muddy complexion. The first entrance of Rome is prodigiously striking. It is by a noble gate, designed by Michael Angelo, and adorned with statues; this brings you into a large square, in the midst of which is a vast obelisk of granite, and in front you have at one view two churches of a handsome architecture, and so much alike, that they are called the Twins; with three streets, the middlemost of which is one of the longest in Rome. As high as my expectation was raised, I confess, the magnificence of this city infinitely surpasses it. You cannot pass along a street, but you have views of some palace, or church, or square, or fountain, the most picturesque and noble one can imagine. We have not yet set about considering its beauties, ancient and modern, with attention; but have already taken a slight transient view of some of the most remarkable. St. Peter's I saw the day after we arrived, and was struck dumb with wonder. I there saw the cardinal D'Auvergne, one of the French ones, who, upon coming off his jour-

ney, immediately repaired hither to offer up his vows at the high altar, and went directly into the conclave; the doors of which we saw opened to him, and all the other immured cardinals came thither to receive him. Upon his entrance they were closed again directly. It is supposed they will not come to an agreement about a pope till after Easter, though the confinement is very disagreeable. I have hardly philosophy enough to see the infinity of fine things, that are here daily in the power of any body that has money, without regretting the want of it; but custom has the power of making things easy to one. I have not yet seen his majesty of Great Britain, &c. though I have the two boys in the gardens of the Villa Borghese, where they go a-shooting almost every day; it was at a distance, indeed, for we did not choose to meet them, as you may imagine. This letter (like all those the English send, or receive) will pass through the hands of that family, before it comes to those it was intended for. They do it more honour than it deserves; and all they will learn from thence will be, that I desire you to give my duty to my father, and wherever else it is due, and that I am, &c.

XXXVII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 15, 1740. Good-Friday.

TO-DAY I am just come from paying my adoration at St. Peter's to three extraordinary relics which are exposed to public view only on these two days in the whole year, at which time all the confraternities in the city come in procession to see them. It was something extremely novel to see that vast church, and the most magnificent in the world, undoubtedly, illuminated (for it was night) by thousands of little crystal lamps, disposed in the figure of a huge cross at the high altar, and seeming to hang alone in the air. All the light proceeded from this, and had the most singular effect imaginable as one entered the great door. Soon after came one after another, I believe, thirty processions, all dressed in linen frocks, and girt with a cord, their heads covered with a cowl all over, only two holes to see through left. Some of them were all black, others red, others white, others party-coloured; these were continually coming and going with their tapers and crucifixes be-

fore them; and to each company, as they arrived and knelt before the great altar, were shown from a balcony, at a great height, the three wonders, which are, you must know, the head of the spear that wounded Christ; St. Veronica's handkerchief, with the miraculous impression of his face upon it: and a piece of the true cross, on the sight of which the people thump their breasts, and kiss the pavement with vast devotion. The tragical part of the ceremony is half a dozen wretched creatures, who, with their faces covered, but naked to the waist, are in a side-chapel disciplining themselves with scourges full of iron prickles; but really in earnest, as our eyes can testify, which saw their backs and arms so raw, we should have taken it for a red satin doublet torn, and showing the skin through, had we not been convinced of the contrary by the blood which was plentifully sprinkled about them. It is late; I give you joy of Porto-Bello, and many other things, which I hope are all true. * * *

XXXVIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Tivoli, May 20, 1740.

THIS day being in the palace of his highness the duke of Modena, he laid his most serene commands upon me to write to Mr. West, and said he thought it for his glory, that I should draw up an inventory of all his most serene possessions for the said West's perusal.—Imprimis, a house, being in circumference a quarter of a mile, two feet and an inch; the said house containing the following particulars, to wit, a great room. Item, another great room; item, a bigger room; item, another room; item, a vast room; item, a sixth of the same; a seventh ditto; an eighth as before; a ninth as abovesaid; a tenth (See No. 1.); item, ten more such, besides twenty, besides, which, not to be too particular, we shall pass over. The said rooms contain nine chairs, two tables, five stools, and a cricket. From whence we shall proceed to the garden, containing two millions of superfine laurel hedges, a clump of cypress trees, and half the river Teverone, that pisses into two thou-

sand several chamberpots. Finis.—Dame Nature desired me to put in a list of her little goods and chattels, and, as they were small, to be very minute about them. She has built here three or four little mountains, and laid them out in an irregular semicircle; from certain others behind, at a greater distance, she has drawn a canal, into which she has put a little river of hers, called Anio; she has cut a huge cleft between the two innermost of her four hills, and there she has left it to its own disposal; which she has no sooner done, but, like a heedless chit, it tumbles headlong down a declivity fifty feet perpendicular, breaks itself all to shatters, and is converted into a shower of rain, where the sun forms many a bow, red, green, blue, and yellow. To get out of our metaphors without any further trouble, it is the most noble sight in the world. . The weight of that quantity of waters, and the force they fall with, have worn the rocks they throw themselves among into a thousand irregular crags, and to a vast depth. In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noise till it comes to another steep, where you see it a second time come roaring down (but first you must walk two miles farther) a greater height than before, but not with that quantity of

waters; for by this time it has divided itself, being crossed and opposed by the rocks, into four several streams, each of which, in emulation of the great one, will tumble down too; and it does tumble down, but not from an equally elevated place; so that you have at one view all these cascades intermixed with groves of olive and little woods, the mountains rising behind them, and on the top of one (that which forms the extremity of one of the half-circle's horns) is seated the town itself. At the very extremity of that extremity, on the brink of the precipice, stands the Sybil's temple, the remains of a little rotunda, surrounded with its portico, above half of whose beautiful Corinthian pillars are still standing and entire; all this on one hand. On the other, the open Campagna of Rome, here and there a little castle on a hillock, and the city itself on the very brink of the horizon, indistinctly seen (being 18 miles off) except the dome of St. Peter's; which, if you look out of your window, wherever you are, I suppose, you can see. I did not tell you that a little below the first fall, on the side of the rock, and hanging over that torrent, are little ruins which they show you for Horace's house, a curious situation to observe the

"Præceps Anio, et Tiburni latus, et uia
Mobilibus pomaria rivis."

Mæcenas did not care for such a noise, it seems, and built him a house (which they also carry one to see) so situated that it sees nothing at all of the matter, and for any thing he knew there might be no such river in the world. Horace had another house on the other side of the Teverone, opposite to Mæcenas's; and they told us there was a bridge of communication, by which "andava il detto Signor per trastullarsi coll istesso Orazio." In coming hither we crossed the Aquæ Albulæ, a vile little brook that stinks like a fury, and they say it has stunk so these thousand years. I forgot the Piscina of Quintilius Varus, where he used to keep certain little fishes. This is very entire, and there is a piece of the aqueduct that supplied it too; in the garden below is old Rome, built in little, just as it was, they say. There are seven temples in it, and no houses at all: They say there were none.

May 21.

We have had the pleasure of going twelve miles out of our way to Palestrina. It has rained all day as if heaven and us were coming together. See my honesty, I do not men-

tion a syllable of the temple of Fortune, because I really did not see it; which, I think, is pretty well for an old traveller. So we returned along the Via Prænestina, saw the Lacus Gabinus and Regillus, where, you know, Castor and Pollux appeared upon a certain occasion. And many a good old tomb we left on each hand, and many an aqueduct,

Dumb are ~~white~~ fountains, and their channels dry.

There are, indeed, two whole modern ones, works of popes, that run about thirty miles a-piece in length; one of them conveys still the famous Aqua Virgo to Rome, and adds vast beauty to the prospect. So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendissimo regalo of letters: in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring. I would have you to know, I expect you should take a handsome crow-quill when you write to me, and not leave room for a pin's point in four sides of a sheet royal. Do you but find matter, I will find spectacles.

I have more time than I thought, and I will employ it in telling you about a ball that we were at the other evening. Figure to

yourself a Roman villa; all its little apartments thrown open, and lighted up to the best advantage. At the upper end of the gallery, a fine concert, in which La Diamantina, a famous virtuosa, played on the violin divinely, and sung angelically; Giovannino and Pasqualini (great names in musical story) also performed miraculously. On each side were ranged all the secular grand monde of Rome, the ambassadors, princesses, and all that. Among the rest Il Serenissimo Pretendente (as the Mantova gazette calls him) displayed his rueful length of person, with his two young ones, and all his ministry around him. "Poi nacque un grazioso ballo," where the world danced, and I sat in a corner regaling myself with iced fruits, and other pleasant rinfrescatives.

XXXIX.

TO MR. WEST.

Rome, May, 1749.

*Mater rosarum, cui teneræ vigent**Auræ Favoni, cui Venus it comes**Lasciva, Nympharum choreis**Et volucrum celebrata cantu !**Dic, non inertem fallere qua diem**Amat sub umbra, seu sinit aureum*

Dormire plectrum, seu retentat
 Pierio Zephyrinus* antro
 Furore dulci plenus, et immemor
 Reptantis inter frigora Tusculi
 Umbrosa, vel colles Amici
 Palladis superantis Albæ.
 Dilecta Fauno, et capripedum choris
 Pineta, testor vos, Anio minax
 Quæcunque per clivos volutus
 Præcipiti tremefecit amne,
 Illius altum Tibur, et Æsulæ
 Audisse silvas nomen amabiles,
 Illius et grâtas Latinis
 Naiasin ingeminasse rupes :
 Nam me Latine Naiades uvida
 Videre ripa, qua niveas levi
 Tam sepe lavit rore plumas,
 Dulce canens Venusinus ales ;
 Mirum ! canenti contieuit nemus,
 Sacrique fontes, et retineat adhuc
 (Sic Musa jussit) saxa molles
 Docta modos, veteresque lauri.
 Mirare nec tu me citharæ rudem
 Claudis laborantem numeris ; loca
 Amœna, jucundumque ver in-
 compositum docuere carmen :
 Hærent sub omni nam folio nigri
 Phœbea luci (credite) somnia,
 Argutiusque et lympa et aure
 Nescio quid solito loquuntur.

* He entitled this charming ode, "Ad C. Favonium Zephyrinum," and writ it immediately after his journey to Frascati and the cascades of Tivoli, which he describes in the preceding letter.

I am to-day just returned from Alba, a good deal fatigued; for you know the Appian is somewhat tiresome.* We dined at Pompey's; he indeed was gone for a few days to his Tusculan, but, by the care of his villicus, we made an admirable meal. We had the dugs of a pregnant sow, a peacock, a dish of thrushes, a noble scarus, just fresh from the Tyrrhene, and some conchyliæ of the lake with garum sauce: for my part I never eat better at Lucullus's table. We drank half a dozen cyathi a-piece of ancient Alban to Pholoë's health; and, after bathing, and playing an hour at ball, we mounted our essedum again, and proceeded up the mount to the temple. The priests there entertained us with an account of a wonderful shower of birds' eggs, that had fallen two days before, which had no sooner touched the ground, but they were converted into gudgeons; as also that the night past a dreadful voice had been heard out of the adytum, which spoke

* However whimsical this humour may appear to some readers, I chose to insert it, as it gives me an opportunity of remarking that Mr. Gray was extremely skilled in the customs of the ancient Romans; and has catalogued, in his common-place book, their various eatables, wines, perfumes, clothes, medicines, &c. with great precision, referring under every article to passages in the poets and historians where their names are mentioned.

Greek during a full half hour, but nobody understood it. But quitting my Romanities, to your great joy and mine, let me tell you, in plain English, that we come from Albano. The present town lies within the enclosure of Pompey's villa in ruins. The Appian way runs through it, by the side of which, a little farther, is a large old tomb, with five pyramids upon it, which the learned suppose to be the burying-place of the family, because they do not know whose it can be else. But the vulgar assure you it is the sepulchre of the Curiatii, and by that name (such is their power) it goes. One drives to Castel Gondolfo, a house of the pope's, situated on the top of one of the Collinette, that forms a brim to the basin, commonly called the Alban lake. It is seven miles round; and directly opposite to you, on the other side, rises the Mons Albanus, much taller than the rest, along whose side are still discoverable (not to common eyes) certain little ruins of the old Alba Longa. They had need be very little, as having been nothing but ruins ever since the days of Tullus Hostilius. On its top is a house of the constable Colonna's, where stood the temple of Jupiter Latialis. At the foot of the hill Gondolfo, are the famous outlets of the lake, built with hewn

*Amiſſa eſt conjux. cur ego et ipſe moror ?
 Si bella eſſe mi iſte mea vivere debuit .
 Triftia conſiderunt qui amiſſa conjuge vivo.
 Nil eſt tam miſerum, quam totam perdere vitam.
 Nec vita enaſci dura peregiſtis crudelia penſa, ſorores,
 Ruptaque deficiunt in primo munere fuſi.
 O nimis injuſtæ ter donos dare manus in annos,
 Deceptus graſtus ſatum ſic preſſit egeſtas .
 Dum vitam tulero, Primus Fiſtes lugea conjugium.*

XL.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Naples, June 17, 1740.

OUR journey hither was through the moſt beautiful part of the fineſt country in the world; and every ſpot of it, on ſome Account or other, famous for theſe three thouſand years paſt.* The ſeaſon has hitherto been juſt as warm as one would wiſh it; no unwholeſome airs, or violent heats, yet heard of: The people call it a backward year, and are in pain about their corn, wine, and oil;

* Mr. Gray wrote a minute deſcription of every thing he ſaw in this tour from Rome to Naples; as alſo of the environs of Rome, Florence, &c. But as theſe papers are apparently only memorandums for his own uſe, I do not think it neceſſary to print them, although they abound with many uncommon remarks, and pertinent clafſical quotations.

but we, who are neither corn, wine, nor oil, find it very agreeable. Our road ~~was~~ through Velletri, Cisterna, Terracina, Capua, and Aversa, and so to Naples. The minute one leaves his holiness's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide uncultivated plains to olive groves and well-tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in festoons between the rows from one tree to another. The great old fig-trees, the oranges in full bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfulest scenes you can conceive; besides that, the roads are wide, well-kept, and full of passengers, a sight I have not beheld this long time. My wonder still increased upon entering the city, which, I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and London. The streets are one continued market, and thronged with populace so much that a coach can hardly pass. The common sort are a jolly lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are; they work till evening; then take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the sea-shore with it, to enjoy the fresco. One sees their little brown children jumping about stark-naked, and the bigger.

ones dancing with castanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. Your maps will show you the situation of Naples; it is on the most lovely bay in the world, and one of the calmest seas: It has many other beauties besides those of nature. We have spent two days in visiting the remarkable places in the country round it, such as the bay of Baiæ, and its remains of antiquity; the lake Avernus, and the Solfatara, Charon's grotto, &c. We have been in the Sibyl's cave and many other strange holes under-ground (I only name them, because you may consult Sandys's travels); but the strangest hole I ever was in, has been to-day, at a place called Portici, where his Sicilian Majesty has a country-seat. About a year ago, as they were digging, they discovered some parts of ancient buildings above thirty feet deep in the ground: curiosity led them on, and they have been digging ever since; the passage they have made, with all its turnings and windings, is now more than a mile long. As you walk, you see parts of an amphitheatre, many houses adorned with marble columns, and incrustated with the same; the front of a temple. several arched vaults of rooms painted in fresco. Some pieces of painting have been taken out from hence, finer than any

thing of the kind before discovered, and with these the king has adorned his palace; also a number of statues, medals, and gems; and more are dug out every day. This is known to be a Roman town,* that in the emperor Titus's time was overwhelmed by a furious eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is hard by.—The wood and beams remain so perfect that you may see the grain; but burnt to a coal, and dropping into dust upon the least touch. We were to-day at the foot of that mountain, which at present only smokes a little, where we saw the materials that fed the stream of fire, which about four years since ran down its side. We have but a few days longer to stay here; too little in conscience for such a place. * * *

XLI.

TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

At my return to this city, the day before yesterday, I had the pleasure of finding yours dated June the 9th. The period of our

* It should seem, by the omission of its name, that it was not then discovered to be Herculaneum.

voyages, at least towards the South, is come, as you wish. We have been at Naples; spent nine or ten days there, and returned to Rome, where finding no likelihood of a pope yet these three months, and quite wearied with the formal assemblies, and little society of that great city, Mr. Walpole determined to return hither to spend the summer, where he imagines he shall pass his time more agreeably, than in the tedious expectation of what, when it happens, will only be a great show. For my own part, I give up the thoughts of all that with but little regret; but the city itself I do not part with so easily, which alone has amusements for whole years. However, I have passed through all that most people do, both ancient and modern; what that is you may see, better than I can tell you, in a thousand books. The conclave we left in greater uncertainty than ever; the more than ordinary liberty they enjoy there, and the unusual coolness of the season, makes the confinement less disagreeable to them than common, and, consequently, maintains them in their irresolution. There have been very high words, one or two (it is said) have come even to blows; two more are dead within this last month, Cenci and

Portia ; the latter died distracted ; and we left another (Altieri) at the extremity : yet nobody dreams of an election till the latter end of September. All this gives great scandal to all good catholics, and every body talks very freely on the subject. The Pretender (whom you desire an account of) I have had frequent opportunities of seeing at church, at the corso, and other places ; but more particularly, and that for a whole night, at a great ball given by count Patrizii to the prince and princess Craon, (who were come to Rome at that time, that he might receive from the hands of the emperor's minister there the order of the golden fleece) at which he and his two sons were present. They are good fine boys, especially the younger, who has the more spirit of the two, and both danced incessantly all night long. For him, he is a thin ill-made man, extremely tall and awkward, of a most unpromising countenance, a good deal resembling king James the second, and has extremely the air and look of an idiot, particularly when he laughs or prays. The first he does not often, the latter continually. He lives private enough with his little court about him, consisting of Lord Dunbar, who manages every thing, and two or three of

the Preston Scotch lords, who would be very glad to make their peace at home.

We happened to be at Naples on Corpus Christi day, the greatest feast in the year, so had an opportunity of seeing their Sicilian majesties to advantage. The king walked in the grand procession, and the queen (being big with child) sat in a balcony. He followed the host to the church of St. Clara, where high mass was celebrated to a glorious concert of music. They are as ugly a little pair as one can see : she a pale girl, marked with the small pox ; and he a brown boy, with a thin face, a huge nose, and as ungain as possible.

We are settled here with Mr. Mann, in a charming apartment ; the river Arno runs under our windows, which we can fish out of. The sky is so serene, and the air so temperate, that one continues in the open air all night long in a slight night gown, without any danger ; and the marble bridge is the resort of every body, where they hear music, eat iced fruits, and sup by moonlight ; though as yet (the season being extremely backward every where) these amusements are not begun. You see we are now coming northward again, though in no great haste ; the Venetian and Milanese

territories, and either Germany or the south of France (according to the turn the war may take,) are all that remain for us, that we have not yet seen; as to Loretto, and that part of Italy, we have given over all thoughts of it.

XLII.

FROM MR. WEST.

Bond-street, June 5, 1740.

I LIVED at the Temple till I was sick of it: I have just left it, and find myself as much a lawyer as I was when I was in it. It is certain, at least, I may study the law here as well as I could there. My being in chambers did not signify to me a pinch of snuff. They tell me my father was a lawyer, and, as you know, eminent in the profession; and such a circumstance must be of advantage to me. My uncle too makes some figure in Westminster-hall; and there's another advantage: then my grandfather's name would get me many friends. Is it not strange that a young fellow, that might enter the world with so many advantages, will not know his own interest? &c. &c. What shall

I say in answer to all this? For money, I neither dote upon it nor despise it; it is a necessary stuff enough. For ambition, I do not want that neither; but it is not to sit upon a bench. In short, is it not a disagreeable thing to force one's inclination, especially when one's young? not to mention that one ought to have the strength of a Hercules to go through our common law; which, I am afraid, I have not. Well! but then, say they, if one profession does not suit you, you may choose another more to your inclination. Now I protest I do not yet know my own inclination, and I believe, if that was to be my direction, I should never fix at all. There is no going by a weather-cock. I could say much more upon this subject; but there is no talking tête-à-tête cross the Alps. Oh, the folly of young men, that never know their own interest! they never grow wise till they are ruined! and then nobody pities them, nor helps them. Dear Gray! consider me in the condition of one that has lived these two years without any person that he can speak freely to. I know it is very seldom that people trouble themselves with the sentiments of those they converse with; so they can chat about trifles, they never care

whether your heart aches or no. Are you one of these? I think not. But what right have I to ask you this question? Have we known one another enough, that I should expect or demand sincerity from you? Yes, Gray, I hope we have; and I have not quite such a mean opinion of myself, as to think I do not deserve it. But, signor, is it not time for me to ask something about your future intentions abroad? Where do you propose going next? An in Apuliam? nam illo si adveneris, tanquam Ulysses, cognosces tuorum neminem. Vale. So Cicero prophesies in the end of one of his letters—and there I end.

Yours, &c.

XLIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

You do yourself and me justice, in imagining that you merit, and that I am capable of sincerity. I have not a thought, or even a weakness, I desire to conceal from you; and consequently on my side deserve to be treated with the same openness of heart.

My vanity perhaps might make me more reserved towards you, if you were one of the heroic race, superior to all human failings ; but as mutual wants are the ties of general society, so are mutual weaknesses of private friendships, supposing them mixed with some proportion of good qualities ; for where one may not sometimes blame, one does not much care ever to praise. All this has the air of an introduction designed to soften a very harsh reproof that is to follow ; but it is no such matter : I only meant to ask, Why did you change your lodging ? Was the air bad, or the situation melancholy ? If so, you are quite in the right. Only, is it not putting yourself a little out of the way of a people, with whom it seems necessary to keep up some sort of intercourse and conversation, though but little for your pleasure or entertainment (yet there are, I believe, such among them as might give you both,) as least for your information in that study, which, when I left you, you thought of applying to ? for that there is a certain study necessary to be followed, if we mean to be of any use in the world, I take for granted ; disagreeable enough (as most necessities are,) but, I am afraid, unavoidable. Into how many bran-

ches the studies are divided in England, every body knows; and between that which you and I had pitched upon, and the other two, it was impossible to balance long. Examples show one that it is not absolutely necessary to be a blockhead to succeed in this profession. The labour is long, and the elements dry and unentertaining; nor was ever any body (especially those that afterwards made a figure in it) amused, or even not disgusted in the beginning; yet, upon a further acquaintance, there is surely matter for curiosity and reflection. It is strange if, among all that huge mass of words, there be not somewhat intermixed for thought. Laws have been the result of long deliberation, and that not of dull men, but the contrary; and have so close a connexion with history, nay, with philosophy itself, that they must partake a little of what they are related to so nearly. Besides, tell me, have you ever made the attempt? Was not you frightened merely with the distant prospect? Had the Gothic character and bulkiness of those volumes (a tenth part of which perhaps it will be no further necessary to consult, than as one does a dictionary) no ill effect upon your eye? Are you sure, if Coke had been printed by Elzevir, and bound in

twenty neat pocket volumes, instead of one folio, you should never have taken him up for an hour, as you would a Tully, or drank your tea over him? I know how great an obstacle ill spirits are to resolution. Do you really think, if you rid ten miles every morning, in a week's time you should not entertain much stronger hopes of the chancellorship, and think it a much more probable thing than you do at present? The advantages you mention are not nothing; our inclinations are more than we imagine in our own power; reason and resolution determine them, and support under many difficulties. To me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and a private one; he who prefers the first, must put himself in a way of being serviceable to the rest of mankind, if he has a mind to be of any consequence among them: nay, he must not refuse being in a certain degree even dependent upon some men who already are so. If he has the good fortune to light on such as will make no ill use of his humility, there is no shame in this: if not, his ambition ought to give place to a reasonable pride, and he should apply to the cultivation of his own mind those abilities which he has not been permitted to use for others' service.

Such a private happiness (supposing a small competence of fortune) is almost always in every one's power, and the proper enjoyment of age, as the other is the employment of youth. You are yet young, have some advantages and opportunities, and an undoubted capacity, which you have never yet put to the trial. Set apart a few hours, see how the first year will agree with you, at the end of it you are still the master; if you change your mind, you will only have got the knowledge of a little somewhat that can do no hurt, or give you cause of repentance. If your inclination be not fixed upon any thing else, it is a symptom that you are not absolutely determined against this, and warns you not to mistake mere indolence for inability. I am sensible there is nothing stronger against what I would persuade you to, than my own practice; which may make you imagine I think not as I speak. Alas! it is not so; but I do not act what I think, and I had rather be the object of your pity than that you should be that of mine; and, be assured, the advantage I may receive from it, does not diminish my concern in hearing you want somebody to converse with freely, whose advice might be of more weight, and always at hand.

- We have some time since come to the southern period of our voyages; we spent about nine days at Naples. It is the largest and most populous city, as its environs are the most deliciously fertile country, of all Italy. We sailed in the bay of Baiæ, sweated in the Solfatara, and died in the grotto del Cane, as all strangers do; saw the Corpus Christi procession, and the king and the queen; and the city underground (which is a wonder I reserve to tell you of another time) and so returned to Rome for another fortnight; left it (left Rome!) and came hither for the summer. You have seen an Epistle* to Mr. Ashton, that seems to me full of spirit and thought, and a good deal of poetic fire. I would know your opinion. Now I talk of verses, Mr. Walpole and I have frequently wondered you should never mention a certain imitation of Spenser, published last year by a namesake† of yours, with which we are all enraptured and enamoured.

* The reader will find this among Mr. Walpole's Fugitive Pieces.

† "On the abuse of Travelling," by Gilbert West.

XLIV.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Aug. 21, N. S. 1740.

It is some time since I have had the pleasure of writing to you, having been upon a little excursion cross the mountains to Bologna. We set out from hence at sunset, passed the Apennines by moonlight, travelling incessantly till we came to Bologna at four in the afternoon next day. There we spent a week agreeably enough, and returned as we came. The day before yesterday arrived the news of a pope: and I have the mortification of being within four days' journey of Rome, and not seeing his coronation, the heats being violent, and the infectious air now at its height. We had an instance, the other day, that it is not only fancy. Two country fellows, strong men, and used to the country about Rome, having occasion to come from thence hither, and travelling on foot, as common with them, one died suddenly on the road; the other got hither, but extremely weak, and in a manner stupid; he was carried to the hospital, but died in two days. So, between fear and laziness, we re-

main here, and must be satisfied with the accounts other people give us of the matter. The new pope is called Benedict XIV. being created cardinal by Benedict XIII. the last pope but one. His name is Lambertini, a noble Bolognese, and archbishop of that city. When I was first there, I remember to have seen him two or three times; he is a short, fat man, about sixty-five years of age, of a hearty, merry countenance, and likely to live some years. He bears a good character for generosity, affability, and other virtues; and, they say, wants neither knowledge nor capacity. The worst side of him is, that he has a nephew or two; besides a certain young favourite, called Melara, who is said to have had, for some time, the arbitrary disposal of his purse and family. He is reported to have made a little speech to the cardinals in the conclave, while they were undetermined about an election, as follows: "Most eminent lords, here are three Bolognese of different characters, but all equally proper for the popedom. If it be your pleasures to pitch upon a saint, there is cardinal Gotti; if upon a politician, there is Aldrovandi; if upon a booby, here am I." The Italian is much more expressive, and, indeed, not to be translated; wherefore, if

you meet with any body that understands it, you may show them what he said in the language he spoke it. "Emin^{ssimi}. Sigrⁱ. Ci siano tré, diversi sì, mà tutti idonei al Papato. Se vi piace un Santo, c'è l'Gotti; se volete una testa scaltra, e Politica, c'è l'Al-drovandé; se un Coglione, ecçò mi!" Cardinal Coscia is restored to his liberty, and, it is said, will be to all his benefices. Corsini (the late pope's nephew) as he has had no hand in this election, it is hoped, will be called to account for all his villanous practices. The Pretender, they say, has resigned all his pretensions to his eldest boy, and will accept of the grand chancellorship, which is thirty thousand crowns a-year; the pension he has at present is only twenty thousand. I do not affirm the truth of this last article; because, if he does, it is necessary he should take the ecclesiastical habit, and it will sound mighty odd to be called his majesty the chancellor.—So ends my gazette.

XLV.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, Sept. 25, N. S. 1748.

WHAT I send you now, as long as it is, is but a piece of a poem. It has the advantage of all fragments, to need neither introduction nor conclusion: besides, if you do not like it, it is but imagining that which went before, and came after, to be infinitely better. Look in Sandys's Travels for the History of Monte Barbaro, and Monte Nuovo.*

* * * * *

* To save the reader trouble, I here insert the passage referred to: "West of Cicero's Villa stands the eminent Gaurus, a stony and desolate mountain, in which there are divers obscure caverns, choaked almost with earth, where many have consumed much fruitless industry in searching for treasure. The famous Lucrine lake extended formerly from Avernus to the aforesaid Gaurus; but is now no other than a little sedgyplash, choaked up by the horrible and astonishing eruption of the new mountain; whereof, as oft as I think, I am easy to credit whatsoever is wonderful. For who here knows not, or who elsewhere will believe, that a mountain should arise (partly out of a lake and partly out of the sea,) in one day and a night, unto such a height as to contend in altitude with the high mountains adjoining? In the year of our Lord 1538, on the 29th of September, when for certain days foregoing the country hereabout was so vexed with perpetual earth-

Nec procul infelix se tollit in æthera Gaurus,
 Prospiciens vitreum lugenti vertice pontum ;
 Tristior ille diu, et veteri desuetus oliva
 Gaurus. pampinæque cheu jam nescius umbræ ;
 Horrendi tam sævi premit vicinia montis,
 Attonitumque urget latus, exuritque ferentem.

Nam fama est olim, media dum rura silebant
 Nocte, Deo victa, et molli perfusa quiete,
 Infremuisse sequor ponti, auditamque per omnes
 Late tellurem surdum immugire cavernas :
 Quo sonitu nemora alta tremunt ; tremit excita tuto
 Parthenopœa sinu, flammantisque ora Vesuvi.
 At subito se aperire solum, vastosque recessus
 Pandere sub pedibus, nigraque voragine fauces ;
 Tum piceas cinerum glomerare sub æthere nubes

quakes, as no one house was left so entire as not to expect an immediate ruin ; after that the sea had retired two hundred paces from the shore (leaving abundance of fish, and springs of fresh water rising in the bottom,) this mountain visibly ascended about the second hour of the night, with an hideous roaring, horribly vomiting stones and such store of cinders as overwhelmed all the buildings thereabout, and the salubrious baths of Tripurgula, for so many ages celebrated ; consumed the vines to ashes, killing birds and beasts ; the fearful inhabitants of Puzzol flying through the dark with their wives and children, naked, defiled, crying out, and detesting their calamities. Manifold mischiefs have they suffered by the barbarous, yet none like this which Nature inflicted. This new mountain, when newly raised, had a number of issues ; at some of them smoking and sometimes flaming ; at others disgorging rivulets of hot waters ; keeping within a terrible rumbling ; and many miserably perished that ventured to descend into the hollowness above. But that hollow on the top is at present an orchard, and the mountain throughout is bereft of its terrors."

Sandys's Travels, book iv. page 275, 277, and 278.

Vorticibus rapidis, ardentique imbre procellam.
 Præcipites fugere fœræ, perque avia longe
 Silvarum fugit pastor, juga per deserta,
 Ah, miser ! increpitans sæpe alta voce per umbram
 Nequidquam natos, creditque audire sequentes.
 Atque ille excelsæ rupis de vertice solus
 Respectans notasque domos, et dulcia regna,
 Nil usquam videt infelix præter mare tristi
 Lumine percussus, et pallentes sulphure campos,
 Fumumque, flammæque, rotataque turbine saxa.

Quin ubi detonuit fragor, et lux reddita cœlo ;
 Mœstos confluere agricolas, passuque videres
 Tandem iterum tinido deserta requirere tecta :
 Sperantes, si forte oculis, si forte darentur
 Uxorum cineres, miserorumve ossa parentum,
 (Tenuia, sed tanti saltem solatia luctus)
 Una colligere et justa componere in urna.
 Uxoribus nusquam cineres, nusquam ossa parentum
 (Spem miseram !) assuetosve Lares, aut rura videbunt.
 Quippe ubi planities campi diffusa jacebat ;
 Mons novus : ille supercilium, fronsque favilla
 Incanum ostentans, ambustis cautibus, æquor
 Subjectum, stragemque suam, mœsta arva, minaci
 Despiciat imperio, soloque in littore regnat.

Hinc infame loci nomen, multosque per annos
 Immemor antiquæ laudis, nescire labores
 Vomeris, et nullo tellus revirescere cultu.
 Non avium colles, non carmine matutino
 Pastorum resonare ; adeo undique dirus habebat
 Informes late horror agros saltusque vacantes.
 Sæpius et longe detorquens navita proram,
 Mostrabat digito littus, sævæque revolvens
 Funera narrabat noctis, veteremque ruinam.

Montis adhuc facies manet hirta atque aspera saxa :
 Sed furor extinctus jamdudum, et flamma quievit,

Quæ nascenti aderat ; seu forte bituminis atri
 Defluxere olim rivi, atque efficta lacuna
 Pabula sufficere ardori viresque recusant ;
 Sive in visceribus meditans incendia jam nunc
 (Horrendum !) arcanis glomerat genti esse futura
 Exitio, sparsos tacitusque recolligit ignes.

Raro per clivos haud secius ordine vidi
 Canescentem oleam : longum post tempus amieti
 Vite virent tumuli ; patriamque revisere gaudens
 Bacchus in assuetis tenerum caput exserit arvis
 Vix tandem, infidoque audet se credere cælo.

There was a certain little ode* set out from Rome, in a letter of recommendation to you, but possibly fell into the enemies' hands, for I never heard of its arrival. It is a little impertinent to inquire after its welfare: but you, that are a father, will excuse a parent's foolish fondness. Last post I received a very diminutive letter: it made excuses for its unentertainingness, very little to the purpose; since it assured me, very strongly, of your esteem, which is to me the thing; all the rest appear but as the petits agrémens, the garnishing of the dish. P. Bougeant, in his *Langage des Bêtes*, fancies that your birds, who continually repeat the same note, say only in plain terms, "Je vous aime, ma chere; ma chere, je

* The Alcaic ode inserted in Letter XXXIX.

they are parsimonious, even to a degree of nastiness. I saw in one of the vastest palaces in Rome, that of prince Pamfilio, the apartment which he himself inhabited, a bed that most servants in England would disdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a soph at Cambridge, for convenience and neatness. This man is worth 30,000*l.* sterling a year. As for eating, there are not two cardinals in Rome that allow more than six paoli, which is three shillings a day, for the expense of their table: and you may imagine they are still less extravagant here than there. But when they receive a visit from any friend, their houses and persons are set out to the greatest advantage, and appear in all their splendour; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with interest, whenever they have occasion to return the visit. I call visits going from one city of Italy to another; for it is not so among acquaintance of the same place on common occasions. The new pope has retrenched the charges of his own table to a sequin (ten shillings) a meal. The applause which all he says and does meet with, is enough to encourage him really to deserve fame. They say he is an able and honest man: he is reckoned a wit

too. The other day, when the senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the first compliments he made him, the pope pulled off his cap. His master of the ceremonies, who stood by his side, touched him softly, as to warn him that such a condescension was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule. Upon which he turned to him, and said, "Oh! I cry you mercy, good master: it is true, I am but a novice of a pope; I have not yet so much as learned ill manners." * * *

XLVII.

TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, Jan. 12, 1741.

WE still continue constant at Florence, at present one of the dullest cities in Italy. Though it is the middle of the carnival, there are no public diversions; nor is masquerading permitted as yet. The emperor's obsequies are to be celebrated publicly the 16th of this month; and after that, it is imagined every thing will go on in its usual course. In the mean time, to employ the minds of the populace, the government has thought

fit to bring into the city in a solemn manner, and at a great expense, a famous statue of the Virgin, called the Madonna dell'Impruneta, from the place of her residence, which is upon a mountain seven miles off. It never has been practised, but at times of public calamity; and was done at present to avert the ill effects of a late great inundation, which it was feared might cause some epidemical distemper. It was introduced a fortnight ago in procession, attended by the council of regency, the senate, the nobility, and all the religious orders, on foot and bare-headed, and so carried to the great church, where it was frequented by an infinite concourse of people from all the country round. Among the rest, I paid my devotions almost every day, and saw numbers of people possessed with the devil, who were brought to be exorcised. It was indeed in the evening, and the church-doors were always shut before the ceremonies were finished, so that I could not be eye witness of the event; but that they were all cured is certain, for one never heard any more of them the next morning. I am to-night just returned from seeing our lady make her exit with the same solemnities she entered. The show had a finer effect than before; for it was dark, and every

body (even those of the mob that could afford it) bore a white-wax flambeau. I believe there was at least five thousand of them, and the march was near three hours in passing before the window. The subject of all this devotion is supposed to be a large tile with a rude figure in bas-relief upon it. I say supposed, because since the time it was found (for it was found in the earth in ploughing) only two people have seen it; the one was, by good luck, a saint; the other was struck blind for his presumption. Ever since she has been covered with seven veils; nevertheless, those who approach her tabernacle cast their eyes down, for fear they should spy her through all her veils. Such is the history, as I had it from the lady of the house where I stood to see her pass; with many other circumstances: all of which she firmly believes, and ten thousand besides.

We shall go to Venice in about six weeks, or sooner. A number of German troops are upon their march into this state, in case the king of Naples thinks proper to attack it. It is certain that he asked the pope's leave for his troops to pass through his country. The Tuscans in general are much discontented, and foolish enough to wish for a Spanish government, or any rather than this. * * *

XLVIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, April 21, 1741.

I KNOW not what degree of satisfaction it will give you to be told that we shall set out from hence the 24th of this month, and not stop above a fortnight at any place in our way. This I feel, that you are the principal pleasure I have to hope for in my own country. Try at least to make me imagine myself not indifferent to you; for I must own I have the vanity of desiring to be esteemed by somebody, and would choose that somebody should be one whom I esteem as much as I do you. As I am recommending myself to your love, methinks I ought to send you my picture (for I am no more what I was, some circumstances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you); you must add then, to your former idea, two years of age, a reasonable quantity of dulness, a great deal of silence, and something that rather resembles, than is, thinking; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have swum before my eyes for some time, a want of love for general society, indeed an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility

for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults or weaknesses, a love of truth, and detestation of every thing else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and some spirits. These are all the alterations I know of, you perhaps may find more. Think not that I have been obliged for this reformation of manners to reason or reflection, but to a severer school-mistress, Experience. One has little merit in learning her lessons, for one cannot well help it; but they are more useful than others, and imprint themselves in the very heart. I find I have been haranguing in the style of the Son of Sirach, so shall finish here, and tell you that our route is settled as follows: First to Bologna for a few days, to hear the Viscontina sing; next to Reggio, where is a fair. Now, you must know, a fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread or rides upon hobby horses; here are no musical clocks, nor tall Leicestershire women; one has nothing but masquing, gaming, and singing. If you love operas, there will be the most splendid in Italy, four tip-top voices, a new theatre, the duke and duchess in all their pomps and vanities. Does not this sound magnificent? Yet is the city of Reggio but one step above Old

Brentford. Well; next to Venice by the 11th of May, there to see the old Doge wed the Adriatic whore. Then to Verona, so to Milan, so to Marseilles, so to Lyons, so to Paris, so to West, &c. in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Eleven months, at different times, have I passed at Florence; and yet (God help me) know not either people or language. Yet the place and the charming prospects demand a poetical farewell, and here it is.

* * Oh Fœculæ amœna

Frigoribus juga, nec nimium spirantibus auris,
Alma quibus Tusci Pallas Deus Apennini
Esse dedit, glaucaque sua canescere silva!
Non ego vos posthac Arma de valle videbo
Porticibus circum, et candenti cincta corona
Villarum longe nitido consurgere dorso,
Antiquamve sedem, et veteres præferre cupressus
Mirabor, tectisque super pendentia tecta.

I will send you, too, a pretty little sonnet of a Signor Abbate Buondelmonte, with my imitation of it.

Spesso Amor sotto la forma
D'amista ride, e s'asconde:
Poi si mischia, e si confonde
Con lo sdegno, e col raueor.
In Pietade ei si trasforma;
Per trastullo, e per dispetto:

Ma nel suo diverso aspetto
Sempre gli, e l'istesso Amor.

Lusit amicitiae interdum velatus amictu,
Et bene composita veste sefellit Amor.
Mox irae assumait cultus, faciemque minantem,
Inque odium versus, versus et in lacrymas :
Ludentem fuge, nec lacrymanti, aut crede furenti ;
Idem est dissimili semper in ore Deus.

Here comes a letter from you.—I must defer giving my opinion of *Pausanias till I can see the whole, and only have said what I did in obedience to your commands. I have spoken with such freedom on this head, that it seems but just you should have your revenge; and therefore I send you the beginning not of an epic poem, but of a metaphysic one. Poems and metaphysics (say you, with your spectacles on) are inconsistent things. A metaphysical poem is a contradiction in terms. It is true, but I will go on. It is Latin too, to increase the absurdity. It will, I suppose, put you in mind of the man who wrote a treatise of canon law in hexameters. Pray help me to the descrip-

* Some part of a tragedy under that title, which Mr. West had begun.

† The beginning of the first book of a didactic poem, "De Principiis Cogitandi."—See Poema.

tion of a mixed mode, and a little episode about space.

Mr. Walpole and Mr. Gray set out from Florence at the time specified in the foregoing letter. When Mr. Gray left Venice, which he did the middle of July following, he returned home through Padua, Verona, Milan, Turin, and Lyons; from all which places he writ either to his father or mother with great punctuality: but merely to inform them of his health and safety; about which (as might be expected) they were now very anxious, as he travelled with only a "Laquais de Voyage." These letters do not even mention that he went out of his way to make a second visit to the Grande Chartreuse, and there wrote in the Album of the Fathers the *Alcaie Ode*:

Oh Tu, severi Religio loci, &c.—*See Poems.*

He was at Turin the 15th of August, and began to cross the Alps the next day. On the 25th he reached Lyons; therefore it must have been between these two dates that he made this visit.

XLIX.

FROM MR. WEST.

I WRITE to make you write, for I have not much to tell you. I have recovered no spirits as yet,* but, as I am not displeased

* * The distresses of Mr. West's mind had already too far affected a body, from the first weak and delicate. His health declined daily,

with my company, I sit purring by the fire-side in my arm-chair with no small satisfaction. I read too sometimes, and have begun Tacitus, but have not yet read enough to judge of him; only his Pannonian sedition, in the first book of his Annals, which is just as far as I have got, seemed to me a little tedious. I have no more to say, but to desire you will write letters of a handsome length, and always answer me within a reasonable space of time, which I leave to your discretion.

Popes, March 28, 1742.

P. S. The new Dunciad! qu'en pensez vous?

L.

TO MR. WEST.*

I TRUST to the country, and that easy indo-

and, therefore, he left town in March, 1742, and, for the benefit of the air, went to David Mitchell's, Esq. at Popes, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire; at whose house he died the 1st of June following.

* Mr Gray came to town about the 1st of September, 1741. His father died the 6th of November following, at the age of sixty-five. The latter end of the subsequent year he went to Cambridge to take his bachelor's degree in civil law.

lence you say you enjoy there, to restore you your health and spirits; and doubt not but, when the sun grows warm enough to tempt you from your fireside, you will (like all other things) be the better for his influence. He is my old friend, and an excellent nurse, I assure you. Had it not been for him, life had been often to me intolerable. Pray do not imagine that Tacitus, of all authors in the world, can be tedious. An annalist, you know, is by no means master of his subject; and I think one may venture to say, that if those Pannonian affairs are tedious in his hands, in another's they would have been insupportable. However, fear not, they will soon be over, and he will make ample amends. A man, who could join the *brilliant* of wit and concise sententiousness peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection and good sense of the best moderns, cannot choose but have something to strike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his detestation of tyranny, and the high spirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out, as it were, whether he would or no. I remember a sentence in his *Agricola* that (concise as it is) I always admired for saying much in a little compass. He speaks of Do-

mitian, who upon seeing the last will of that general, where he had made him co-heir with his wife and daughter, "Satis constabat lætatum eum, velut honore, judicioque: tam cæca et corrupta mens assiduïs adulationibus erat, ut nescirèt a bono patre non scribi hæredem, nisi malum principem."

As to the Dunciad, it is greatly admired: The genii of Operas and Schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the Virtuosos and Florists, and the yawn of Dulness in the end, are as fine as any thing he has written. The Metaphysicians' part is to me the worst; and here and there a few ill-expressed lines, and some hardly intelligible.

I take the liberty of sending you a long speech of Agrippina;* much too long, but I could be glad you would retrench it. Acronia, you may remember, had been giving quiet counsels. I fancy, if it ever be finished, it will be in the nature of Nat. Lee's bedlam tragedy, which had twenty-five acts and some odd scenes.*

* See Poems.

LI.

FROM MR. WEST.

Pope's, April 4, 1742.

I own in general I think Agrippina's speech too long; but how to retrench it, I know not: but I have something else to say, and that is in relation to the style, which appears to me too antiquated. Racine was of another opinion: he no where gives you the phrases of Ronsard: His language is the language of the times, and that of the purest sort; so that his French is reckoned a standard. I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage: but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakspeare. One may imitate (if one can) Shakspeare's manner, his surprising strokes of true nature, his expressive force in painting characters, and all his other beauties; preserving at the same time our own language. Were Shakspeare alive now, he would write in a different style from what he did. These are my sentiments upon these matters: perhaps I am wrong, for I am neither a Tarpa, nor am I quite an Aristarchus. You see I write

freely both of you and Shakspeare; but it is as good as writing not freely, where you know it is acceptable.

I have been tormented within this week with a most violent cough; for when once it sets up its note, it will go on, cough after cough, shaking and tearing me for half an hour together, and then it leaves me in a great sweat, as much fatigued as if I had been labouring at the plough. All this description of my cough in prose, is only to introduce another description of it in verse, perhaps not worth your perusal; but it is very short, and besides has this remarkable in it, that it was the production of four o'clock in the morning, while I lay in my bed tossing and coughing, and all unable to sleep.

*Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis,
Qua durare datur, traxitque sub ilia vires :
Dura etenim vegans imo sub pectore regna,
Perpetuo exercet teneras luctamine costas,
Oraque distorquet, vocisque immutat anhelam ;
Nec cessare locus : sed sævo concita motu,
Molle domat latys, et corpus labor omne fatigat :
Unde molesta dies, noctemque insomnia turbant.
Nec Tua, si mecum Comes hic jueundus adesses,
Verba juvare queant, aut hunc lenire dolorem
Sufficiant tua vox dulcis, nec vultus amatus.*

Do not mistake me, I do not condemn Tacitus: I was then inclined to find him tedious: the German sedition sufficiently made up for it; and the speech of Germanicus, by which he reclaims his soldiers, is quite masterly. Your New Dunciad I have no conception of. I shall be too late for our dinner if I write any more.

Yours.

LII.

TO MR. WEST.

London, April, Thursday.

You are the first who ever made a muse of a cough; to me it seems a much more easy task to versify in one's sleep, (that indeed you were of old famous for) than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when she had a cough) ever sung so sweetly. I give you thanks for your wamble, and wish you could sing yourself to rest. These wicked remains of your illness will sure give way to warm weather and gentle exercise; which I hope you will not omit as the season advances. Whatever low spirits and indolence, the effect of them, may advise to the

contrary, I pray you add five steps to your walk daily for my sake; by the help of which, in a month's time, I propose to set you on horseback.

I talked of the Dunciad as concluding you had seen it; if you have not, do you choose I should get and send it to you? I have myself, upon your recommendation, been reading Joseph Andrews. The incidents are ill-laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson Adams is perfectly well; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson; and throughout he shows himself well read in stage-coaches, country 'squires, inns, and inns of court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However the exaltedness of some minds (or rather as I shrewdly suspect their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things, (I mean such as characterize and paint nature) yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind, the passions, and what not. Now as the paradisaical pleasures of the Mahometans consist in playing upon the flute and lying with

Hooris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.

You are very good in giving yourself the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has so little need of apologies, that I should scarce excuse your treating me any otherwise; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my understanding. As to matter of style, I have this to say: the language of the age is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose *versé*, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost every one, that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives: nay, sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakspeare and Milton have been great creators this way; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom every body reckons a great master of our poetical tongue.—Full of *musical moppings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleasant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love—stood si-

lent in his *mood*—with knots and *knares* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—and *disarray* and shameful rout—*wayward* but wise—*furberish* for the field—the *foiled dodder'd oaks*—*disherited*—*smouldering* flames—*retchless* of laws—*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his side—the *grandam-hag*—*villanize* his father's fame.—But they are infinite: and our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakspeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Adlisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph:
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up—

And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakspeare may doubtless be carried too far; and is no sort of excuse for sentiments ill-suited, or speeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the case with me. I guess the most faulty expressions may be these—*silken* son of *dalliance*—*drowsier* pretensions—wrinkled *bel-dams*—*arched* the hearer's brow and *riveted* his eyes in *fearful extasie*. These are easily altered or omitted: and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or superfluous, there is nothing easier than to leave out the whole. The first ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the best;* and as for the rest, I was betrayed into a good deal of it by Tacitus; only what he has said in five words, I imagine I have said in fifty lines: such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now, if you are of my opinion, una litura may do the business, better than a dozen; and you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a sort of spider; and have little else to do but spin

* The lines which he means here are from "thus ever grave and undisturb'd reflection," to "Rubellius lives." For the part of the scene, which he sent in his former letter, began there.

it over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas! for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself, I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folks. But no matter; it makes the hours pass; and is better than *ἡ ἀπαιτία καὶ ἀνεργία κατὰ τὸν νόμον.*

Adieu.

LIII.

FROM MR. WEST.

To begin with the conclusion of your letter, which is Greek, I desire that you will quarrel no more with your manner of passing your time. In my opinion it is irreproachable, especially as it produces such excellent fruit; and if I, like a saucy bird, must be pecking at it, you ought to consider that it is because I like it. No una litura I beg you, no unravelling of your web, dear sir! only pursue it a little further, and then one shall be able to judge of it a little better. You know the crisis of a play is in the first act; its damnation or salvation wholly rests there. But till that first act is over, every body suspends his vote; so how do

you think I can form, as yet, any just idea of the speeches in regard to their length or shortness? The connection and symmetry of such little parts with one another must naturally escape me, as not having the plan of the whole in my head; neither can I decide about the thoughts, whether they are wrong or superfluous; they may have some future tendency which I perceive not. The style only was free to me, and there I find we are pretty much of the same sentiment: for you say the affectation of imitating Shakspeare may doubtless be carried too far: I say as much and no more. For old words we know are old gold, provided they are well chosen. Whatever Ennius was, I do not consider Shakspeare as a dunghill in the least: on the contrary, he is a mine of ancient ore, where all our great modern poets have found their advantage. I do not know how it is; but his old expressions have more energy in them than ours, and are even more adapted to poetry; certainly, where they are judiciously and sparingly inserted, they add a certain grace to the composition; in the same manner as Poussin gave a beauty to his pictures by his knowledge in the ancient proportions: but should he, or any other painter, carry the imita-

tion too far, and neglect that best of models, Nature, I am afraid it would prove a very flat performance. To finish this long criticism: I have this further notion about old words revived, (is not this a pretty way of finishing?) I think them of excellent use in tales; they add a certain drollery to the comic, and a romantic gravity to the serious, which are both charming in their kind; and this way of charming Dryden understood very well. One need only read Milton to acknowledge the dignity they give the epic. But now comes my opinion, that they ought to be used in tragedy more sparingly, than in most kinds of poetry. Tragedy is designed for public representation, and what is designed for that should be certainly most intelligible. I believe half the audience that come to Shakspeare's plays do not understand the half of what they hear.—But finissons enfin.—Yet one word more.—You think the ten or twelve first lines the best, now I am for the fourteen last;* add, that they contain not one word of ancients.

* He means the conclusion of the first scene. But here and throughout his criticism on old words, he is not so consistent as his correspondent; for he here insists that *all* ancients should be struck out, and in a former passage he admits it may be used sparingly.

I rejoice you found amusement in Joseph Andrews. But then I think your conceptions of Paradise a little upon the Bergerac. *Les Lettres du Seraphim R. a madame la Cherubinesse de Q.* What a piece of extravagance would there be!

And now you must know that my body continues weak and enervate. And for my animal spirits they are in perpetual fluctuation: some whole days I have no relish, no attention for any thing; at other times I revive, and am capable of writing a long letter, as you see; and though I do not write speeches, yet I translate them. When you understand what speech, you will own that it is a bold and perhaps a dull attempt. In three words, it is prose, it is from Tacitus, it is of Germanicus. Peruse, perpend, pronounce.*

LIV.

TO MR. WEST.

London, April, 1742.

I SHOULD not have failed to answer your letter immediately, but I went out of town for

* This speech I omit to print as I have generally avoided to publish these translations either of Mr. Gray or his friend.

a little while, which hindered me. Its length, (besides the pleasure naturally accompanying a long letter from you) affords me a new one, when I think it is a symptom of the recovery of your health, and flatter myself that your bodily strength returns in proportion. Pray do not forget to mention the progress you make continually. As to Agrippina, I begin to be of your opinion; and find myself (as women are of their children) less enamoured of my productions the older they grow. She is laid up to sleep till next summer; so bid her good night. I think you have translated Tacitus very justly, that is, freely; and accommodated his thoughts to the turn and genius of our language; which, though I commend your judgment, is no commendation of the English tongue, which is too diffuse, and daily grows more and more enervate. One shall never be more sensible of this, than in turning an author like Tacitus. I have been trying it in some parts of Thucydides, (who has a little resemblance of him in his conciseness) and endeavoured to do it closely, but found it produced mere nonsense. If you have any inclination to see what figure Tacitus makes in Italian, I have a Tuscan translation of Davanzati, much esteemed in

Italy; and will send you the same speech you sent me; that is, if you care for it. In the mean time accept of Propertius.* * * *

LV.

FROM MR. WEST.

Pope, May 5, 1742.

WITHOUT any preface I come to your verses, which I read over and over with excessive pleasure, and which are at least as good as Propertius. I am only sorry you follow the blunders of Broukhusius, all whose insertions are nonsense. I have some objections to your antiquated words, and am also an enemy to Alexandrines; at least I do not like them in elegy. But, after all, I admire your translation so extremely, that I cannot help repeating I long to show you some little errors you are fallen into by following Broukhusius. * * * * * Were I with you now, and Propertius with your verses lay upon the table between us, I could discuss this point in a moment; but there is nothing so tiresome as spinning out a criti-

* A translation of the first elegy of the second book in English rhyme; omitted for the reason given in the last note.

cism in a letter; doubts arise, and explanations follow, till there swells out at least a volume of undigested observations: and all because you are not with him whom you want to convince. Read only the letters between Pope and Cromwell in proof of this; they dispute without end. Are you aware now that I have an interest all this while in banishing criticism from our correspondence? Indeed I have; for I am going to write down a little ode (if it deserves the name) for your perusal, which I am afraid will hardly stand that test. Nevertheless I leave you at your full liberty; so here it follows.

ODE.

Dear Gray, that always in my heart
Possesses far the better part,
What mean these sudden blasts that rise
And drive the zephyrs from the skies?
O join with mine thy tuneful lay,
And invoke the tardy May.

Come, fairest nymph, resume thy reign!
Bring all the Graces in thy train!
With balmy breath, and flowery tread,
Rise from thy soft ambrosial bed;
Where, in Elysian slumber bound,
Embowering myrtles veil thee round.

Awake, in all thy glories dress'd ;
Recall the zephyrs from the west :
Restore the sun, revive the skies :
At mine and Nature's call, arise !
Great Nature's self upbraids thy stay,
And misses her accustom'd May.

See ! all her works demand thy aid ;
The labours of Pomona fade :
A plaint is heard from every tree ;
Each budding floweret calls for thee ;
The birds forget to love and sing ;
With storms alone the forests ring.

Come then, with Pleasure at thy side,
Diffuse thy vernal spirit wide ;
Create, where'er thou turn'st thy eye,
Peace, Plenty, Love, and Harmony ;
Till every being share its part,
And heaven and earth be glad at heart.

LVI.

TO MR. WEST.

London, May 3, 1742.

I REJOICE to see you putting up your prayers to the May: she cannot choose but come at such a call. It is as light and genteel as herself. You bid me find fault; I am afraid I cannot; however, I will try. The first stanza (if what you say to me in it did not

make me think it the best) I should call the worst of the five (except the fourth line.) The two next are very picturesque, Miltonic, and musical; her bed is so soft and so snug that I long to lie with her. But those two lines, "Great Nature," are my favourites. The exclamation of the flowers is a little step too far. The last stanza is full as good as the second and third; the last line bold, but I think not too bold. Now, as to myself and my translation, pray do not call names. I never saw Broukhusius in my life. It is Scaliger who attempted to range Propertius in order; who was, and still is, in sad condition * * * * *. You see, by what I sent you, that I converse as usual with none but the dead: they are my old friends, and almost make me long to be with them. You will not wonder therefore, that I, who live only in times past, am able to tell you no news of the present. I have finished the Peloponnesian war much to my honour, and a tight conflict it was, I promise you, I have drank and sung with Anacreon for the last fortnight, and am now feeding sheep with Theocritus. Besides, to quit my figure, (because it is foolish) I have run over Pliny's Epistles and Martial *α παρ' ἐγὼ*; not to mention Petrarch, who, by the way, is some-

times very tender and natural. I must needs tell you three lines in Anacreon, where the expression seems to me inimitable. He is describing hair as he would have it painted.

Ελπας δ' ελευθέρους μοι
Πλοκαμιαν ατακτα συνθεις
Αφες ως θελουσι κειθαι.

Guess, too, where this is about a dimple.

*Sigilla in mento impressa Amoris digitulo
Vestigio demonstrant mollitudinem.*

LVII.

FROM MR. WEST.

Pepes, May 11, 1742.

YOUR fragment is in Aulus Gellius; and both it and your Greek delicious. But why are you thus melancholy? I am so sorry for it, that you see I cannot forbear writing again the very first opportunity; though I have little to say, except to expostulate with you about it. I find you converse much with the dead, and I do not blame you for that; I converse with them too, though not indeed

with the Greek. But I must condemn you for your longing to be with them. What, are there no joys among the living? I could almost cry out with Cutullus, "Alphene immemor, atque unanimis false sodalibus!" But to turn an accusation thus upon another, is ungenerous; so I will take my leave of you for the present with a "Vale, et vive paulisper cum vivis."

LVIII.

TO MR. WEST.

London, May 27, 1742.

MINE, you are to know, is a white melancholy, or rather leucocholy for the most part; which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and ça ne laisse que de s'amuser. The only fault of it is insipidity; which is apt now and then to give a sort of ennui, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est*;

for it believes, nay, is sure of every thing that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and every thing that is pleasureable; from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but shall be never the nearest any society; so, if you have any charity, you will continue to write. My life is like Harry the Fourth's supper of hens.—“Poulets à la broche, poulets en ragoût, poulets en hâchis, poulets en fricasées.” Reading here, reading there; nothing but books with different sauces.—Do not let me lose my dessert then; for though that be reading too, yet it has a very different flavour. The May seems to be come since your invitation; and I propose to bask in her beams and dress me in her roses.

Et caput in verna semper habere rosa:

I shall see Mr. * * and his wife, nay, and his child too, for he has got a boy. Is it not odd to consider one's contemporaries in the grave light of husband and father? There is my lords * * and * * *, they are statesmen:

do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiser than I was then; no, not for having been beyond sea.—Pray how are you?

I send you an inscription for a wood joining to a park of mine; (it is on the confines of Mount Cithæron, on the left hand as you go to Thebes): you know I am no friend to hunters, and hate to be disturbed by their noise.

Αζόμενος πολυθρόνι εκκδολου αλσος ανασσας,
 τας δυνας τερμενη, λαιπε, κυναγι, θεας.
 Μουνοι αρ ενθα κυων ζαθιων κλαγγουσιν υλαγμοι,
 ανταχοις Νυμφαν αγροτην κελαδω.

Here follows also the beginning of an heroic epistle;* but you must give me leave to tell my own story first, because historians differ. Massinissa was the son of Gala, king of the Massyli; and, when very young at the head of his father's army, gave a most signal overthrow to Syphax, king of the Massæsylians, then an ally of the Romans. Soon after Asdrubal, son of Gisco the Carthaginian general, gave the beautiful Sophonisba, his

* *Egregium accipio promissi munus amoris*, &c. See *Poems*.

daughter, in marriage to the young prince. But this marriage was not consummated on account of Massinissa's being obliged to hasten into Spain, there to command his father's troops, who were auxiliaries of the Carthaginians. Their affairs at this time began to be in a bad condition; and they thought it might be greatly for their interest, if they could bring over Syphax to themselves. This in time they actually effected; and, to strengthen their new alliance, commanded Asdrubal to give his daughter to Syphax. (It is probable their ingratitude to Massinissa arose from the great change of affairs, which had happened among the Massylians during his absence; for his father and uncle were dead, and a distant relation of the royal family had usurped the throne.) Sophonisba was accordingly married to Syphax; and Massinissa, enraged at the affront, became a friend to the Romans. They drove the Carthaginians before them out of Spain, and carried the war into Africa, defeated Syphax, and took him prisoner; upon which Cirtha (his capital) opened her gates to Lælius and Massinissa. The rest of the affair, the marriage, and the sending of poison, every body knows. This is partly taken from Livy, and partly from Appian.

Immediately after writing the preceding letter, Mr. Gray went upon a visit to his relations at Stoke; where he writ that beautiful little ode which stands first in his collection of poems. He sent it as soon as written to his beloved friend: but he was dead before it reached Hertfordshire. He died only twenty-days after he had written the letter to Mr. Gray, which concluded with "*Vale, et vive paulisper cum vivis.*"

LIX.

TO DR. WHARTON.*

Cambridge, Dec. 27, 1742.

I OUGHT to have returned you my thanks a long time ago, for the pleasure, I should say prodigy, of your letter; for such a thing has not happened above twice within this last age to mortal man, and no one here can conceive what it may portend. You have heard, I suppose, how I have been employed a part of the time; how, by my own indefatigable application for these ten years past, and by the care and vigilance of that worthy magis-

* Of Old-Park, near Durham. With this gentleman Mr. Gray contracted an acquaintance very early: and though they were not educated at Eton, yet afterwards at Cambridge, when the doctor was fellow of Pembroke-Hall, they became intimate friends, and continued so to the time of Mr. Gray's death.

trate the man in blue,* (who, I assure you, has not spared his labour, nor could have done more for his own son) I am got half way to the top of jurisprudence,† and bid as fair as another body to open a case of impotency with all decency and circumspection. You see my ambition, I do not doubt but some thirty years hence I shall convince the world and you that I am a very pretty young fellow; and may come to shine in a profession, perhaps the noblest of all, except man-midwifery. As for you, if your distemper and you can but agree about going to London, I may reasonably expect in a much shorter time to see you in your three-cornered villa, doing the honours of a well-furnished table with as much dignity, as rich a mien, and as capacious a belly, as Dr. Mead. Methinks I see Dr. **, at the lower end of it, lost in admiration of your goodly person and parts, cramming down his envy (for it will rise) with the wing of a pheasant, and drowning it in neat Burgundy. But not to tempt your asthma too much with such a prospect, I should think you might be almost as happy and as

* A servant of the vice-chancellor's for the time being, usually known by the name of Blue Coat, whose business it is to attend acts for degrees, &c.

† *i. e.* Bachelor of civil law.

great as this even in the country. But you know best, and I should be sorry to say any thing that might stop you in the career of glory; far be it from me to hamper the wheels of your gilded chariot. Go on, sir Thomas; and when you die, (for even physicians must die) may the faculty in Warwick-lane erect your statue in the very niche of sir John Cutler's.

I was going to tell you how sorry I am for your illness, but I hope it is too late now: I can only say that I really was very sorry. May you live a hundred Christmasses, and eat as many collars of brawn stuck with rosemary. Adieu, &c.

LX.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Peterhouse, April 20, 1744.

You write so feelingly to Mr. Brown, and represent your abandoned condition in terms so touching, that what gratitude could not effect in several months, compassion has brought about in a few days; and broke that strong attachment, or rather allegiance, which I and all here owe to our sovereign

lady and mistress, the president of presidents and head of heads, (if I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton) the power of Laziness. You must know she had been pleased to appoint me (in preference to so many old servants of hers who had spent their whole lives in qualifying themselves for the office) grand picker of straws and push-pin player to her supinity, (for that is her title). The first is much in the nature of lord president of the council; and the other like the groom-porter, only without the profit; but as they are both things of very great honour in this country, I consider with myself the load of envy attending such great charges; and besides (between you and me) I found myself unable to support the fatigue of keeping up the appearance that persons of such dignity must do; so I thought proper to decline it, and excused myself as well as I could. However, as you see such an affair must take up a good deal of time, and it has always been the policy of this court to proceed slowly, like the Imperial and that of Spain, in the dispatch of business, you will on this account the easier forgive me, if I have not answered you letter before.

You desire to know, it seems, what character the poem of your young friend bears here.* I wonder that you ask the opinion of a nation, where those, who pretend to judge, do not judge at all ; and the rest (the wiser part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them ; that is, Dick's and the rainbow Coffee-houses. Your readier way would be to ask the ladies that keep the bars in those two theatres of criticism. However, to show you that I am a judge, as well as my countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it (but no matter ; no more have they), that it seems to me above the middling ; and now and then, for a little while, rises even to the best, particularly in description. It is often obscure, and even unintelligible ; and too much infected with the Hutchinson jargon. In short, its great fault is, that it was published at least nine years too early. And so methinks in a few words, "à la mode du Temple," I have very pert-

* Pleasures of the Imagination :—From the posthumous publication of Dr. Akenside's Poems, it should seem that the author had very much the same opinion afterwards of his own work, which Mr. Gray here expresses : since he undertook a reform of it, which must have given him, had he concluded it, as much trouble as if he had written it entirely new.

ly dispatched what perhaps may for several years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myself.

You are much in the right to have a taste for Socrates ; he was a divine man. I must tell you, by way of news of the place, that the other day a certain new professor made an apology for him an hour long in the schools; and all the world brought in Socrates guilty, except the people of his own college.

The muse is gone, and left me in far worse company ; if she returns, you will hear of her. As to her child* (since you are so good as to inquire after it) it is but a puling chit yet, not a bit grown to speak of ; I believe, poor thing, it has got the worms, that will carry it off at last. Mr. Trollope and I are in a course of tar-water ; he for his present, and I for my future distempers. If you think it will kill me, send away a man and horse directly ; for I drink like a fish.

LXI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Feb. 3, 1746.

You are so good to inquire after my usual

* His poem "De Principiis Cogitandi."

time of coming to town : it is at a season when even you, the perpetual friend of London, will, I fear, hardly be in it—the middle of June : and I commonly return hither in September ; a month when I may more probably find you at home.

Our defeat to be sure is a rueful affair, for the honour of the troops ; but the duke is gone it seems with the rapidity of a cannon-bullet to undefeat us again. The common people in town at least know how to be afraid : but we are such *uncommon* people here as to have no more sense of danger, than if the battle had been fought when and where the battle of Cannæ was. The perception of these calamities and of their consequences, that we are supposed to get from books, is so faintly impressed, that we talk of war, famine, and pestilence, with no more apprehension than of a broken head, or of a coach overturned between York and Edinburgh. I heard three people, sensible middle-aged men (when the Scotch were said to be at Stamford, and actually were at Derby), talking of hiring a chaise to go to Caxton (a place in the high road, to see the Pretender and the highlanders as they passed.

I can say no more for Mr. Pope (for what you keep in reserve may be worse than all

the rest). It is natural to wish the finest writer, one of them, we ever had, should be an honest man. It is for the interest even of that virtue, whose friend he professed himself, and whose beauties he sung, that he should not be found a dirty animal. But, however, this is Mr. Warburton's business, not mine, who may scribble his pen to the stumps and all in vain, if these facts are so. It is not from what he told me about himself that I thought well of him, but from a humanity and goodness of heart, ay, and greatness of mind, that runs through his private correspondence, not less apparent than are a thousand little vanities and weaknesses mixed with those good qualities; for nobody ever took him for a philosopher.

If you know any thing of Mr. Mann's state of health and happiness, or the motions of Mr. Chute homewards, it will be a particular favour to inform me of them, as I have not heard this half-year from them.

LXII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, December 11, 1746.

I WOULD make you an excuse (as indeed I

ought), if they were a sort of thing I ever gave any credit to myself in these cases; but I know they are never true. Nothing so silly as indolence when it hopes to disguise itself; every one knows it by its saunter, as they do his majesty (God bless him) at a masquerade, by the firmness of his tread and the elevation of his chin. However, somewhat I had to say that has a little shadow of reason in it. I have been in town (I suppose you know) flaunting about at all kind of public places with two friends lately returned from abroad. The world itself has some attractions in it to a solitary of six years' standing: and agreeable well-meaning people of sense (thank heaven there are so few of them) are my peculiar magnet. It is no wonder then if I felt some reluctance at parting with them so soon; or if my spirits, when I returned back to my cell, should sink for a time, not indeed to storm and tempest, but a good deal below changeable. Besides, Seneca says (and my pitch of philosophy does not pretend to be much above Seneca), "*Nunquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid ex his, quæ fugavi, redit.*" And it will happen to such as us, mere imps of

Science. Well it may, when Wisdom herself is forced often

In sweet retired solitude
To plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort,
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.

It is a foolish thing that without money one cannot either live, as one pleases, or where and with whom one pleases. Swift somewhere says, that money is liberty; and I fear money is friendship too and society, and almost every external blessing. It is a great, though an ill-natured, comfort, to see most of those who have it in plenty, without pleasure, without liberty, and without friends.

I am not altogether of your opinion as to your historical consolation in time of trouble: a calm melancholy it may produce, a stiller sort of despair) and that only in some circumstances, and on some constitutions); but I doubt no real comfort or content can ever arise in the human mind, but from hope.

I take it very ill you should have been in the twentieth year of the war,* and yet say nothing of the retreat before Syracuse: is it,

* Thucydides, 1. vii.

or is it not, the finest thing you ever read in your life? And how does Xenophon or Plutarch agree with you? For my part I read Aristotle, his poetics, politics, and morals; though I do not well know which is which. In the first place, he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book: it tastes for all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention; so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties; and, what is worse, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly from the transcribblers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you are to expect from him.

LXIII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

January, 1747.

It is doubtless an encouragement to continue writing to you, when you tell me you answer me with pleasure: I have another reason which would make me very copious, had I any thing to say: it is, that I write to you with equal pleasure, though not with equal spirits, nor with like plenty of materials: please to subtract then so much for spirit, and so much for matter; and you will find me, I hope, neither so slow, nor so short, as I might otherwise seem. Besides, I had a mind to send you the remainder of Agrippina, that was lost in a wilderness of papers. Certainly you do her too much honour; she seemed to me to talk like an *Oldboy*, all in figures and mere poetry, instead of nature and the language of real passion. Do you remember *Approchez-vous,* Neron*.—Who would not rather have thought of that half line than all Mr. Rowe's flowers of eloquence? However, you will find the re-

* Agrippina, in Racine's tragedy of *Britannicus*. B.

mainder here at the end in an outrageous long speech: it was begun about four years ago (it is a misfortune you know my age, else I might have added, when I was very young.) Poor West put a stop to that tragic torrent he saw breaking in upon him:—have a care, I warn you, not to set open the flood-gate again, lest it drown you and me and the bishop and all.

I am very sorry to hear you treat philosophy and her followers like a parcel of monks and hermits, and think myself obliged to vindicate a profession I honour, *bien que je n'en tiennne pas boutique* (as Madame Sevigné says). The first man that ever bore the name, if you remember, used to say, that life was like the Olympic games (the greatest public assembly of his age and country), where some came to show their strength and agility of body, as the champions; others, as the musicians, orators, poets, and historians, to show their excellence in those arts; the traders, to get money; and the better sort, to enjoy the spectacle, and judge of all these. They did not then run away from society for fear of its temptations: they passed their days in the midst of it: conversation was their business: they cultivated the arts of persuasion, on purpose to show men it was

their interest, as well as their duty, not to be foolish, and false, and unjust; and that too in many instances with success: which is not very strange; for they showed by their life that their lessons were not impracticable; and that pleasures were no temptations, but to such as wanted a clear perception of the pains annexed to them.* But I have done speaking à la Grecque. Mr. Ratcliffe† made a shift to behave very rationally without their instructions, at a season which they took a great deal of pains to fortify themselves and others against: one would not desire to lose one's head with a better grace. I am particularly satisfied with the humanity of that last embrace to all the people about him. Sure it must be somewhat embarrassing to die before so much good company!

You need not fear but posterity will be

* Never perhaps was a more admirable picture drawn of true philosophy and its real and important services; services not confined to the speculative opinions of the studios, but adapted to the common purposes of life, and promoting the general happiness of mankind; not upon the chimerical basis of a system, but on the immutable foundations of truth and virtue. B.

† Brother to the earl of Derwentwater. He was executed at Tyburn, December, 1746, for having been concerned in the rebellion in Scotland. R.

ever glad to know the absurdity of their ancestors: the foolish will be glad to know they were as foolish as they, and the wise will be glad to find themselves wiser. You will please all the world then; and if you recount miracles you will be believed so much the sooner. We are pleased when we wonder; and we believe because we are pleased. Folly and wisdom, and wonder and pleasure, join with me in desiring you would continue to entertain them: refuse us, if you can. Adieu, dear sir!

LXIV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I HAD been absent from this place a few days, and at my return found Cibber's book* upon my table: I return you my thanks for it, and have already run over a considerable part, for who could resist Mrs. Letitia Pilkington's recommendation? (By the way,

* Entitled "Observations on Cicero's Character," or some such thing: for I have not the book by me, and it has been long since forgot.

is there any such gentlewoman?* or has somebody put on the style of a scribbling woman's panegyric to deceive and laugh at Colley?) He seems to me full as pert and as dull as usual. There are whole pages of common-place stuff, that for stupidity might have been wrote by Dr. Waterland, or any other grave divine, did not the flirting saucy phrase give them at a distance an air of youth and gayety. It is very true, he is often in the right with regard to Tully's weaknesses; but was there any one that did not see them? Those, I imagine, that would find a man after God's own heart, are no more likely to trust the doctor's recommendation than the player's; and as to reason and truth, would they know their own faces, do you think, if they looked in the glass, and saw themselves so bedizzened in tattered fringe and tarnished lacc, in French jewels, and dirty furbelows, the frippery of a stroller's wardrobe?

Literature, to take it in its most comprehensive sense, and include every thing that requires invention or judgment, or barely application and industry, seems indeed drawing apace to its dissolution, and remarkably

* This lady made herself more known some time after the date of this letter.

since the beginning of the war. I remember to have read Mr. Spence's pretty book; though (as he then had not been at Rome for the last time) it must have increased greatly since that in bulk. If you ask me what I read, I protest I do not recollect one syllable; but only in general, that they were the best bred sort of men in the world, just the kind of *frinds* one would wish to meet in a fine summer's evening, if one wished to meet any at all. The heads and tails of the dialogues, published separate in 16mo. would make the sweetest reading in *natiur* for young gentlemen of family and fortune, that are learning to dance.* I rejoice to hear there is such a crowd of dramatical performances coming upon the stage. Agrippina can stay very well, she thanks you, and be damned at leisure: I hope in God you have not mentioned, or showed to any body that scene (for, trusting in its badness, I forgot to caution you concerning it); but I heard the other day, that I was writing a play, and was told the name of it, which nobody here could

* This ridicule on the Platonic way of dialogue (as it was aimed to be, though nothing less resembles it) is, in my opinion, admirable. Lord Shaftsbury was the first who brought it into vogue, and Mr. Spence, (if we except a few Scotch writers) the last who practised it.

know, I am sure. The employment you propose to me much better suits my inclination; but I much fear our joint-stock would hardly compose a small volume; what I have is less considerable than you would imagine, and of that little we should not be willing to publish all.* * * *

This is all I can any where find. You, I imagine, may have a good deal more. I should not care how unwise the ordinary run of readers might think my affection for him, provided those few, that ever loved any body, or judged of any thing rightly, might, from such little remains, be moved to consider what he would have been; and to wish that Heaven had granted him a longer life and a mind more at ease.

I send you a few lines, though Latin, which you do not like, for the sake of the subject; it makes part of a large design, and is the beginning of the fourth book, which

* What is here omitted was a short catalogue of Mr. West's poetry then in Mr. Gray's hands; the reader has seen as much of it as I am persuaded his friend would have published, had he prosecuted the task which Mr. Walpole recommended to him, that of printing his own and Mr. West's poems in the same volume: and which we also perceive from this letter he was not averse from doing.

was intended to treat of the passions. Excuse the three first verses; you know vanity, with the Romans, is a poetical licence.

LXV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I HAVE abundance of thanks to return you for the entertainment Mr. Spence's book has given me, which I have almost run over already; and I much fear (see what it is to make a figure!) the breadth of the margin, and the neatness of the prints, which are better done than one could expect, have prevailed upon me to like it far better than I did in manuscript, for I think it is not the very genteel deportment of Polymetis, nor the lively wit of Mysagetes, that have at all corrupted me.

There is one fundamental fault, from whence most of the little faults throughout the whole arise. He professes to neglect the Greek writers, who could have given him more instruction on the very heads he professes to treat, than all the others put together. Who does not know, that upon

the Latin, the Sabine, and Hetruscan mythology (which probably might themselves, at a remoter period of time, owe their origin to Greece too) the Romans engrafted almost the whole religion of Greece to make what is called their own? It would be hard to find any one circumstance that is properly of their invention. In the ruder days of the republic, the picturesque part of their religion (which is the province he has chose, and would be thought to confine himself to) was probably borrowed entirely from the Tuscans, who, as a wealthy and trading people, may be well supposed, and indeed are known, to have had the arts flourishing in a considerable degree among them. What could inform him here, but Dio. Halicarnassus (who expressly treats of those times with great curiosity and industry) and the remains of the first Roman writers? The former he has neglected as a Greek; and the latter, he says, were but little acquainted with the arts, and consequently are but of small authority. In the better ages, when every temple and public building in Rome was peopled with imported deities and heroes, and when all the artists of reputation they made use of were Greeks, what wonder, if their eyes grew familiarized to Grecian forms and hab-

its (especially in a matter of this kind, where so much depends upon the imagination); and if those figures introduced with them a belief of such fables, as first gave them being, and dressed them out in their various attributes, it was natural then, and (I should think) necessary, to go to the source itself, the Greek accounts of their own religion; but, to say the truth, I suspect he was little conversant in those books and that language; for he rarely quotes any but Lucian, an author that falls in every body's way, and who lived at the very extremity of that period he has set to his inquiries, later than any of the poets he has meddled with, and for that reason ought to have been regarded as but an indifferent authority; especially being a Syrian too. His book (as he says himself) is, I think, rather a beginning than a perfect work; but a beginning at the wrong end: for if any body should finish it by inquiring into the Greek mythology, as he proposes, it will be necessary to read it backward.

There are several little neglects, that one might have told him of, which I noted in reading it hastily; as page 311, a discourse about orange trees, occasioned by Virgil's "*inter odoratum lauri nemus*," where he fancies the Roman *Laurus* to be our Laurel;

though undoubtedly the bay-tree, which is *odoratum*, and, I believe, still called *Lauro*, or *Alloro*, at Rome; and that the "*Malum Medicum*" in the *Georgic* is the orange; though Theophrastus, whence Virgil borrowed it, or even Pliny, whom he himself quotes, might convince him it is the cedrato which he has often tasted at Florence. Page 144 is an account of Domenichino's Cardinal Virtues, and a fling at the Jesuits, neither of which belong to them: the painting is in a church of the Barnabiti, dedicated to St. Carlo Borromeo, whose motto is *HUMILITAS*. Page 151, in a note, he says, the old Romans did not regard Fortune as a deity; though Servius Tullius (whom she was said to be in love with; nay, there was actually an affair between them) founded her temple in Foro Boario. By the way, her worship was Greek, and this king was educated in the family of Tarquinius Priscus, whose father was a Corinthian; so it is easy to conceive how early the religion of Rome might be mixed with that of Greece, &c. &c.

Dr. Middleton has sent me to-day a book on the Roman Senate, the substance of a dispute between lord Hervey and him, though it never interrupted *their* friendship, he says, and I dare say not.

LXVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, March 1, 1747.

As one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima, (Selima, was it, or Fatima?) or rather I knew them both together; for I cannot justly say which was which.—Then as to your handsome cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the survivor: Oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry;

"*Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque doloris.*"

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives time to rejoice with you on your new honours.* This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we shall hear you are a free-mason, or a gormogon at least.—Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your cat, feuë made-moiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows:†
* * *—There's a poem for you; it is rather too long for an epitaph.

LXVII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, June 5, 1748.

YOUR friendship has interested itself in my

* Mr. Walpole was about this time elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

† The reader need hardly be told, that the 4th ode in the collection of his poems was inserted in the place of these asterisks. This letter (as some other slight ones have been) is printed chiefly to mark the date of one of his compositions.

affairs so naturally, that I cannot help troubling you a little with a detail of them.
* * * * * And now, my dear Wharton, why must I tell you a thing so contrary to my own wishes, and yours? I believe it is impossible for me to see you in the north, or to enjoy any of those agreeable hours I had flattered myself with. This business will oblige me to be in town several times during the summer, particularly in August, when half the money is to be paid; besides the good people here would think me the most careless and ruinous of mortals, if I should take such a journey at this time. The only satisfaction I can pretend to, is that of hearing from you, and particularly at this time when I was bid to expect the good news of an increase of your family. Your opinion of Diodorus is doubtless right; but there are things in him very curious, got out of better authorities now lost. Do you remember the Egyptian history, and particularly the account of the gold mines? My own readings have been cruelly interrupted:

* The paragraph here omitted contained an account of Mr. Gray's loss of a house by fire in Cornhill, and the expense he should be at in rebuilding it. Though it was insured, he could at this time ill bear to lay out the additional sum necessary for the purpose.

What I have been highly pleased with, is the new comedy from Paris by Gresset, called *le Mechant*; if you have it not, buy his works all together in two little volumes : they are collected by the Dutch booksellers, and consequently contain some trash; but then there are the *Ververt*, the epistle to P. Bougeant, the *Chartreuse*, that to his sister, an ode on his country, and another on mediocrity, and the *Sidnei*, another comedy, all which have great beauties. There is also a poem lately published by Thomson, called the *Castle of Indolence*, with some good stanzas in it. Mr. Mason is my acquaintance; I liked that ode* much, but have found no one else that did. He has

* Ode to a Water Nymph, published about this time in Dodsley's miscellany. On reading what follows, many readers, I suspect, will think me as simple as ever, in forbearing to expunge the paragraph: but as I publish Mr. Gray's sentiments of authors, as well living as dead, without reserve, I should do them injustice, if I was more scrupulous with respect to myself. My friends, I am sure, will be much amused with this and another passage hereafter of a like sort. My enemies, if they please, may sneer at it; and say (which they will very truly) that twenty-five years have made a very considerable abatement in my general philanthropy. Men of the world will not blame me for writing from so prudent a motive, as that of making my fortune by it; and yet the truth, I believe, at the time was, that I was perfectly well satisfied, if my publications furnished me with a few guineas to see a play or an opera.

much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature; but then he is really in simplicity a child, and loves every body he meets with: he reads little or nothing; writes abundance, and that with a design to make his fortune by it. My best compliments to Mrs. Wharton and your family: does that name include any body I am not yet acquainted with?

LXVIII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, August 19, 1748.

I AM glad you have had any pleasure in Gresset; he seems to me a truly elegant and charming writer; the *Mechant* is the best comedy I ever read; his *Edward* I could scarce get through; it is puerile; though there are good lines, such as this for example:

“ *Le jour d'un nouveau regne est le jour des ingrats.*”

But good lines will make any thing rather than a good play: however you are to con-

time of night will not suffer me to go on;
but I will write again in a week.

LXX.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, April 25, 1749.

I PERCEIVE that second parts are as bad to write as they can be to read; for this, which you ought to have had a week after the first, has been a full month in coming forth. The spirit of laziness (the spirit of the place) begins to possess even me, who have so long declaimed against it; yet has it not so prevailed, but that I feel that discontent with myself, that ennui, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings. Time will settle my conscience; time will reconcile me to this languid companion: We shall smoke, we shall tittle, we shall doze together: we shall have our little jokes like other people, and our old stories: brandy will finish what port began; and a month after the time you will see in some corner of a London evening post, "Yesterday died the reverend Mr. John-Gray, senior fellow of Clare-Hall, a facetious companion, and well respected by

all that knew him. His death is supposed to have been occasioned by a fit of an apoplexy, being found fallen out of bed with his head in the chamber-pot."

In the meanwhile; to go on with my account of new books. Montesquieu's work, which I mentioned before, is now publishing anew in 2 vols. 8vo.. Have you seen old Crebillon's *Catalina*, a tragedy, which has had a prodigious run at Paris? Historical truth is too much perverted in it, which is ridiculous in a story so generally known; but if you can get over this, the sentiments and versification are fine, and most of the characters (particularly the principal one) painted with great spirit.

Mr. Birch, the indefatigable, has just put out a thick octavo of original papers of queen Elizabeth's time; there are many curious things in it, particularly letters from Sir Robert Cecil (Salisbury) about his negotiations with Henry IV. of France, the earl of Monmouth's odd account of queen Elizabeth's death, several peculiarities of James I. and prince Henry, &c. and above all, an excellent account of the state of France, with characters of the king, his court, and ministry, by Sir George Carew, ambassador there. This, I think, is all new

worth mentioning, that I have seen or heard of; except a Natural History of Peru, in Spanish, printed at London, by Don—— something, a man of learning, sent thither by that court on purpose.

You ask after my chronology. It was begun, as I told you, almost two years ago, when I was in the midst of Diogenes Laertius and his philosophers, as a proœmium to their works. My intention in forming this table was not so much for public events, though these too have a column assigned them, but rather in a literary way to compare the time of all great men, their writings and their transactions. I have brought it from the 30th Olympiad, where ~~it~~ begins, to the 113th; that is, 332 years.* My only modern assistants were Marsham, Dodwell, and Bentley.

I have since that read Pausanias and Athenæus all through, and Æschylus again. I am now in Pindar and Lysias; for I take verse and prose together, like bread and cheese.

* This laborious work was formed much in the manner of the President Henault's "Histoire de France." Every page consisted of nine columns; one for the Olympiad, the next for the Archons, the third for the public affairs of Greece, the three next for the philosophers, and the three last for poets, historians, and orators. I do not find it carried further than the date above mentioned.

LXXI.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, August 8, 1749.

I PROMISED Dr. Keene long since to give you an account of our magnificences here;* but the newspapers and he himself in person, have got the start of my indolence, so that by this time you are well acquainted with all the events that adorned that week of wonders. Thus much I may venture to tell you, because it is probable nobody else has done it, that our friend *'s zeal and eloquence surpassed all power of description. Vesuvio in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance; nor (since I am at my mountains) Pelion, with all its pine-trees in a storm of wind, more impetuous than his action; and yet the senate-house still stands, and (I thank God) we are all safe and well at your service. I was ready to sink for him, and scarce dared to look about me, when I was sure it was all over; but soon found I might have spared my con-

* The Duke of Newcastle's Installation as Chancellor of the University.

fusion; all people joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right; and I dare swear not three people here but think him a model of oratory; for all the duke's little court came with a resolution to be pleased; and when the tone was once given, the university, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, struck into it with an admirable harmony: for the rest of the performances, they were just what they usually are. Every one, while it lasted, was very gay and very busy in the morning, and very owlish and very tipsy at night: I make no exceptions from the chancellor to blue-coat. Mason's ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance; and, for my own part, I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an occasion. Pray let me know your sentiments; for doubtless you have seen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more; he is very ingenious, with great good-nature and simplicity; a little vain, but in so harmless and so comical a way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but withal so ignorant in the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion; so sincere and so undisguised, that no mind, with

a spark of generosity, would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all. After all, I like him so well, I could wish you knew him.

LXXII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.

THE unhappy news I have just received from you equally surprises and afflicts me.* I have lost a person I loved very much, and have been used to from my infancy; but am much more concerned for your loss, the circumstances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you must be too sensible of them yourself; and will, I fear, more and more need a consolation that no one can give, except He who has preserved her to you so many years, and at last, when it was his

* The death of his aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus, who died the 5th of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke church-yard, near the chancel door, in which also his mother and himself (according to the direction in his will) were afterwards buried.

pleasure, has taken her from us to himself: and perhaps, if we reflect upon what she felt in this life, we may look upon this as an instance of his goodness both to her, and to those that loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless; she might have long wished to end her misery without being able to attain it; or perhaps even lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe; a sad spectacle to such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is at last easy and happy; and has now more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will support yourself with that resignation we owe to Him, who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the same reason. I would have come to you directly, but you do not say whether you desire I should or not; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

LXXIII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Stoke, June 12, 1750.

As I live in a place, where even the ordinary tattle of the town arrives not till it is stale, and which produces no events of its own, you will not desire any excuse from me for writing so seldom, especially as of all people living I know you are the least a friend to letters spun out of one's own brains, with all the toil and constraint that accompanies sentimental productions. I have been here at Stoke a few days (where I shall continue good part of the summer); and having put an end to a thing, whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it you.* You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a *thing with an end to it*; a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want, but which this epistle I am determined shall not want, when it tells you that I am ever

Yours.

* This was the Elegy in the church yard.—B.

Not that I have done yet; but who could avoid the temptation of finishing so roundly and so cleverly in the manner of good queen Anne's days? Now I have talked of writings; I have seen a book, which is by this time in the press, against Middleton (though without naming him), by Asheton. As far as I can judge from a very hasty reading, there are things in it new and ingenious, but rather too prolix, and the style here and there savouring too strongly of sermon. I imagine it will do him credit. So much for other people, now to *self* again. You are desired to tell me your opinion, if you can take the pains, of these lines. I am once more

Ever yours.

LXXIV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, August 9, 1750.

ARISTOTLE says (one may write Greek to you without scandal) that *Οι τοκοι ου διαλυουσι την Φιλίαν απλως, αλλα την επεργειαν ιαν δι χρονης η απουσια γινηται και της Φιλιας δεκε ληθη ποιειν, ουκ ιερηται*

Πολλας δι φιλιας απροσμενη διαλυουσι.

But Aristotle may say whatever he pleases, I do not find myself at all the worse for it. I could indeed wish to refresh my *Engyria* a little at Durham by the sight of you, but when is there a probability of my being so happy? It concerned me greatly when I heard the other day that your asthma continued at times to afflict you, and that you were often obliged to go into the country to breathe; you cannot oblige me more than by giving me an account both of the state of your body and mind: I hope the latter is able to keep you cheerful and easy in spite of the frailties of its companion. As to my own, it can neither do one nor the other; and I have the mortification to find my spiritual part the most infirm thing about me. You have doubtless heard of the loss I have had in Dr. Middleton, whose house was the only easy place one could find to converse in at Cambridge: for my part, I find a friend so uncommon a thing, that I cannot help regretting even an old acquaintance, which is an indifferent likeness of it; and though I do not approve of the spirit of his books, methinks 'tis pity the world should lose so rare a thing as a good writer.*

* Mr. Gray used to say, that good writing not only required great parts, but the very best of those parts.

My studies cannot furnish a recommendation of many new books to you. There is a defence "*de l'Esprit des Loix*," by Montesquieu himself; it has some lively things in it, but is very short, and his adversary appears to be so mean a bigot that he deserved no answer. There are 3 vols. in 4to. of "*Histoire du Cabinet du Roi*, by Messrs. Buffon and d'Aubenton;" the first is a man of character, but I am told has hurt it by this work. It is all a sort of introduction to natural history; the weak part of it is a love of system which runs through it; the most contrary thing in the world to a science entirely grounded upon experiments, and which has nothing to do with vivacity of imagination. However, I cannot help commending the general view which he gives of the face of the earth, followed by a particular one of all the known nations, their peculiar figure and manners, which is the best epitome of geography I ever met with, and written with sense and elegance; in short, these books are well worth turning over. The memoirs of the Abbé de Mongon, in 5 vols. are highly commended, but I have not seen them. He was engaged in several embassies to Germany, England, &c. during the course of the late war. The president Henault's "*Abbrégé*

Chronologique de l'Histoire de France," I believe I have mentioned to you as a very good book of its kind.

LXXV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Dec. 17, 1740.

OF my house I cannot say much,* I wish I could; but for my heart, it is no less yours than it has long been; and the last thing in the world that will throw it into tumults is a fine lady. The verses, you so kindly try to keep in countenance, were written merely to divert lady Cobham and her family, and succeeded accordingly; but being showed about in town, are not liked there at all. Mrs. * *, a very fashionable personage, told Mr. Walpole that she had seen a thing by a friend of his which she did not know what to make of, for it aimed at every thing, and meant nothing; to which he replied, that he had always taken her for a woman of sense, and was very sorry to be undeceived. On

* The house he was rebuilding in Cornhill.

the other hand, the stanzas* which I now enclose to you have had the misfortune, by Mr. Walpole's fault, to be made still more public, for which they certainly were never meant; but it is too late to complain. They have been so applauded, it is quite a shame to repeat it: I mean not to be modest; but it is a shame for those who have said such superlative things about them, that I cannot repeat them. I should have been glad that you and two or three more people had liked them, which would have satisfied my ambition on this head amply. I have been this month in town, not at Newcastle-House, but diverting myself among my gay acquaintance; and return to my cell with so much the more pleasure. I dare not speak of my future excursion to Durham for fear of a disappointment, but at present it is my full intention.

LXXVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1751.

As you have brought me into a little sort of

* Elegy in a country church-yard.

distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the magazine of magazines into their hands: they tell me that an *ingenious* poem, called Reflections in a Country Church-yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, &c. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be,—Elegy, written in a country church-yard. If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better.

If you behold the magazine of magazines in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

LXXVII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Ash-Wednesday, Cambridge, 1761.

You have indeed conducted with great decency my little *misfortune*: you have taken a paternal care of it, and expressed much more kindness than could have been expected from so near a relation. But we are all frail; and I hope to do as much for you another time. Nurse Dodsley has given it a pinch or two in the cradle, that (I doubt) it will bear the marks of as long as it lives. But no matter: we have ourselves suffered under her hands before now; and besides, it will only look the more careless and by *accident* as it were. I thank you for your advertisement, which saves my honour, and in manner bien flatteuse pour moi, who should be put to it even to make myself a compliment in good English.

You will take me for a mere poet, and a fetcher and carrier of singsong, if I tell you that I intend to send you the beginning of a drama;* not mine, thank God, as you'll believe, when you hear it is finished, but wrote by a person whom I have a very good opinion of. It is (unfortunately) in the manner of the ancient drama, with choruses, which I am, to my shame, the occasion of; for, as great part of it was at first written in that form, I would not suffer him to change it to a play fit for the stage, as he intended, because the lyric parts are the best of it, and they must have been lost. The story is Saxon, and the language has a tang of Shakspeare, that suits an old-fashioned fable very well. In short, I don't do it merely to amuse you, but for the sake of the author, who wants a judge, and so I would lend him *mine*: yet not without your leave, lest you should have us up to dirty our stockings at the bar of your house for wasting the time and politics of the *nation*. Adieu, sir!

* This was the *Elfrida* of Mr. Mason.—B.

LXXVIII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, March 3, 1751.

ELFRIDA (for that is the fair one's name) and her author are now in town together. He has promised me, that he will send a part of it to you some morning while he is there; and (if you shall think it worth while to descend to particulars) I should be glad you would tell me very freely your opinion about it; for he shall know nothing of the matter, that is not fit for the ears of a *tender* parent—though, by the way, he has ingenuity and merit enough (whatever his drama may have) to bear hearing his faults very patiently. I must only beg you not to show it, much less let it be copied; for it will be published, though not as yet.

I do not expect any more editions,* as I have appeared in more magazines than one. The chief errata were *sacred* bower for *secret*; *hidden* for *kindred* (in spite of dukes and classics); and *frowning* as in scorn for *smiling*. I humbly propose, for the benefit

* Of the Elegy in the church-yard.—B.

of Mr. Dodsley and his matrons, that take *awake* for a verb, that they should read *asleep*, and all will be right.* Gil Blas is the Lying Valet in five acts. The fine lady has half-a-dozen good lines dispersed in it. Pompey is the hasty production of a Mr. Coventry (cousin to him you knew), a young clergyman: I found it out by three characters, which once made part of a comedy that he showed me of his own writing. Has that miracle of *tenderness and sensibility* (as she calls it) lady Vane given you any amusement? Peregrine, whom she uses as a vehicle, is very poor indeed, with a few exceptions. In the last volume is a character of Mr. Lyttelton, under the name of Gosling Scrag, and a parody of part of his monody, under the notion of a pastoral on the death of his grandmother.

* The verse to which he alludes is this :

“ Ev’n from the tomb the voice of nature cries ;
Ev’n in our ashes live their wonted fires.”

The last line of which he had at first written thus :

“ Awake and faithful to her wonted fires.”—B.

LXXIX.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Nov. Tuesday, Cambridge.

IT is a misfortune to me to be at a distance from both of you at present. A letter can give one so little idea of such matters!

* * * * I always believed well of his heart and temper, and would gladly do so still. If they are as they should be, I should have expected every thing from such an explanation; for it is a tenet with me (a simple one, you'll perhaps say), that if ever two people, who love one another, come to breaking, it is for want of a timely eclaircissement, a full and precise one, without witnesses or mediators, and without reserving any one disagreeable circumstance for the mind to brood upon in silence.

I am not totally of your mind as to Mr. Lyttelton's elegy, though I love kids and fawns as little as you do. If it were all like the fourth stanza, I should be excessively pleased. Nature and sorrow, and tenderness, are the true genius of such things; and something of these I find in several parts of it (not in the orange-tree): poetical orna-

ments are foreign to the purpose, for they only show a man is not sorry;—and devotion worse; for it teaches him, that he ought not to be sorry, which is all the pleasure of the thing. I beg leave to turn your weather-cock the contrary way. Your epistle* I have not seen a great while, and doctor M. is not in the way to give me a sight of it: but I remember enough to be sure all the world will be pleased with it, even with all its *faults upon its head*, if you don't care to mend them. I would try to do it myself (however hazardous), rather than it should remain unpublished. As to my Eton ode, Mr. Dodsley is *padrone*.† The second‡ you had, I suppose you do not think worth giving him: otherwise, to me it seems not worse than the former. He might have Selima§ too, unless she be of too little importance for his patriot collection; or perhaps the *connexions* you had with her may interfere. *Che so io?* Adieu!

* From Florence to Thomas Asheton.—B.

† To publish in his collection of poems.—B.

‡ The ode to Spring.—B.

§ The ode on Mr. Walpole's cat drowned in the tub of gold-fish.

—B.

LXXX.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Dec. Monday.

THIS comes du fond de ma cellule to salute Mr. H. W. not so much him that visits and votes, and goes to White's and to court; as the H. W. in his rural capacity, snug in his tub on Windsor-hill, and brooding over folios of his own creatiop: him that can slip away, like a pregnant beauty (but a little oftener,) into the country, be brought to bed perhaps of twins, and whisk to town again the week after with a face as if nothing had happened. Among all the little folks, my godsons and daughters, I cannot choose but inquire more particularly after the health of one; I mean (without a figure) the Memoirs:* Do they grow? Do they unite, and hold up their heads, and dress themselves? Do they begin to think of making their appearance in the world, that is to say, fifty years hence, to make posterity stare, and all good people cross themselves? Has Asheton (who will be then lord bishop of Killaloe, and is to

* Memoirs of his own time, which Mr. Walpole was then writing.—B.

publish them) thought of an *aviso al lettore* to prefix to them yet, importing, that if the words church, king, religion, ministry, &c. be found often repeated in this book, they are not to be taken literally, but poetically, and as may be most strictly reconcileable to the faith then established;—that he knew the author well when he was a young man; and can testify upon the honour of his function, that he said his prayers regularly and devoutly, had a profound reverence for the clergy, and firmly believed every thing that was the fashion in those days?

When you have done impeaching my lord Lovat, I hope to hear *de vos nouvelles*, and moreover, whether you have got colonel Conway yet? Whether sir C. Williams is to go to Berlin? What sort of a prince Mitridate may be?—and whatever other tidings you choose to refresh an anchoret with. *Frattanto* I send you a scene in a tragedy:* if it don't make you cry, it will make you laugh; and so it moves some passion, that I take to be enough. Adieu, dear sir! I am, &c.

* The first scene in Mr. Gray's unfinished tragedy of Agrippina, published in Mr. Mason's edition of his works.—B.

LXXXI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, October 8, 1751.

I SEND you this* (as you desire) merely to make up half-a-dozen; though it will hardly answer your end in furnishing out either a head or tail-piece. But your own fable† may much better supply the place. You have altered it to its advantage; but there is still something a little embarrassed here and there in the expression. I rejoice to find you apply (pardon the use of so odious a word) to the history of your own times. Speak, and spare not. Be as impartial as you can; and after all, the world will not believe you are so, though you should make as many protestations as bishop Burnet. They will feel in their own breast, and find it very possible to hate fourscore persons, yea, ninety and nine: so you must rest satisfied with the testimony of your own conscience. Somebody has laughed at Mr. Dodsley, or at me, when they talked of the *bat*: I have

* The hymn to adversity.—B.

† The entail.—B.

nothing more, either nocturnal or diurnal, to deck his miscellany with. We have a man here that writes a good hand; but he has little failings that hinder my recommending him to you.* He is lousy, and he is mad: he sets out this week for Bedlam; but if you insist upon it, I don't doubt he will pay his respects to you. I have seen two of Dr. Middleton's unpublished works. One is about 44 pages in 4to. against Dr. Waterland, who wrote a very orthodox book on the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity, and insisted, that Christians ought to have no communion with such as differ from them in fundamentals. Middleton enters no farther into the doctrine itself than to show that a mere speculative point can never be called a fundamental; and that the earlier fathers, on whose concurrent tradition Waterland would build, are so far, when they speak of the three persons, from agreeing with the present notion of our church, that they declare for the inferiority of the son, and seem to have no clear and distinct idea of the Holy Ghost at all. The rest is employed in exposing the folly and cruelty of stiffness and zealotism in religion, and in

* As an amanuensis. B.

showing that the primitive ages of the church, in which tradition had its rise, were (even by confession of the best scholars and most orthodox writers) the *era of nonsense and absurdity*. It is finished, and very well wrote; but has been mostly incorporated into his other works, particularly the Inquiry: and for this reason I suppose he has writ upon it, *This wholly laid aside*. The second is in Latin, on miracles; to show, that of the two methods of defending Christianity, one from its intrinsic evidence, the holiness and purity of its doctrines, the other from its external, the miracles said to be wrought to confirm it; the first has been little attended to by reason of its difficulty; the second much insisted upon, because it appeared an easier task; but that it can in reality prove nothing at all. “Nobilis illa quidem defensio (the first) quam si obtinere potuissent, rem simul omnem expediisse, causamque penitus vicisse viderentur. At causæ hujus defendendæ labor cum tantâ argumentandi cavillandique molestiâ conjunctus ad alteram, quam dixi, defensionis viam, ut commodiorem longe et faciliorem, plerosque adegit—ego vero istiusmodi defensione religionem nostram non modo non confirmari, sed dubiam potius suspectamque reddi existimo.” He

then proceeds to consider miracles in general, and afterwards those of the Pagans, compared with those of Christ. I only tell you the plan, for I have not read it out (though it is short); but you will not doubt to what conclusion it tends. There is another thing, I know not what, I am to see. As to the treatise on prayer; they say it is burnt indeed. Adieu!

LXXXII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

YOUR pen was too rapid to mind the common form of a direction, and so, by omitting the words *near Windsor*, your letter has been diverting itself at another Stoke near Aylesbury, and came not to my hands till to-day. The true original chairs were all sold, when the Huntingdons broke; there are nothing now but Halsey-chairs, not adapted to the squareness of a Gothic dowager's rump. And by the way, I do not see how the uneasiness and uncomfortableness of a coronation chair can be any objection with you: every chair that is easy is modern, and unknown to our ancestors. As I remember,

there were certain low chairs, that looked like ebony, at Esher, and were old and pretty. Why should not Mr. Bentley improve upon them? I do not wonder at Dodsley. You have talked to him of six *odes*, for so you are pleased to call every thing I write, though it be but a receipt to make apple-dumplings. He has reason to gulp when he finds one of them only a long story. I don't know but I may send him very soon (by your hands) an ode to his own tooth, a high Pindaric upon stilts, which one must be a better scholar than he is to understand a line of, and the very best scholars will understand but a little matter here and there. It wants but seventeen lines of having an end, I don't say of being finished. As it is so unfortunate to come too late for Mr. Bentley, it may appear in the fourth volume of the *Miscellanies*, provided you don't think it execrable, and suppress it. Pray, when the fine book is to be printed,* let me revise the press, for you know you can't; and there are a few trifles I could wish altered.

I know not what you mean by hours of love, and cherries, and pine-apples. I nei-

* The edition of his odes printed at Strawberry-hill. B.

ther see nor hear any thing here, and am of opinion that is the best way. My compliments to Mr. Bentley, if he be with you.

I desire you would not show that epigram I repeated to you,* as mine. I have heard of it twice already as coming from you.

LXXXIII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

I AM obliged to you for Mr. Dodsley's book,† and, having pretty well looked it over, will (as you desire) tell you my opinion of it. He might, methinks, have spared the Graces in his frontispiece, if he chose to be economical, and dressed his authors in a little more decent raiment—not in whited-brown paper, and distorted characters, like an old ballad. I am ashamed to see myself; but the company keeps me in countenance: so to begin with Mr. Tickell. This is not only a state-poem (my ancient aversion) but a state-poem on the peace of Utrecht. If Mr. Pope

* The editor much wishes he could repeat it to the public, but has not been able to discover the epigram alluded to, B.

† His collection of poems. B.

had wrote a panegyric on it, one could hardly have read him with patience: but this is only a poor short-winded imitator of Addison, who had himself not above three or four notes in poetry, sweet enough indeed, like those of a German flute, but such as soon tire and satiate the ear with their frequent return. Tickell has added to this a great poverty of sense, and a string of transitions that hardly become a school-boy. However, I forgive him for the sake of his ballad,* which I always thought the prettiest in the world. All there is of M. Green here has been printed before: there is a profusion of wit every where; reading would have formed his judgment, and harmonized his verse, for even his wood-notes often break out into strains of real poetry and music. The School-mistress is excellent in its kind, and masterly; and (I am sorry to differ from you, but) London is to me one of those few imitations, that have all the ease and all the spirit of an original. The same man's† verses at the opening of Garrick's theatre are far from bad. Mr.

* Colin and Lucy; beginning

“Of Leinster famed for maidens fair.” B.

† Dr. Samuel Johnson. B.

Dyer (here you will despise me highly) has more of poetry in his imagination, than almost any of our number; but rough and injudicious. I should range Mr. Bramston only a step or two above Dr. King, who is as low in my estimation as in yours. Dr. Evans is a furious madman; and Pre-existence is nonsense in all her altitudes. Mr. Lyttelton is a gentle elegiac person: Mr. Nugent* sure did not write his own ode.† I like Mr. Whitehead's little poems, I mean the Ode on a Tent, the Verses to Garrick, and particularly those to Charles Townsend, better than any thing I had seen before of him. I gladly pass over H. Brown, and the rest, to come at you. You know I was of the publishing side, and thought your reasons against it none; for though, as Mr. Chute said extremely well, the *still small voice* of poetry was not made to be heard in a crowd; yet satire will be heard, for all the audience are by nature her friends; especially when she appears in the spirit of Dryden, with his strength, and often with his versification; such as you have caught in those lines on the royal unction,

* Afterwards earl Nugent. B.

† That addressed to Mr. Pulteney. B.

on the papal dominion, and convents of both sexes, on Henry VIII. and Charles II. for these are to me the shining parts of your epistle.* There are many lines I could wish corrected, and some blotted out, but beauties enough to atone for a thousand worse faults than these. The opinion of such as can at all judge, who saw it before in Dr. Middleton's hands, concurs nearly with mine. As to what any one says, since it came out; our people (you must know) are slow of judgment: they wait till some bold body saves them the trouble, and then follow his opinion; or stay till they hear what is said in town, that is, at some bishop's table, or some coffee-house about the Temple. When they are determined, I will tell you faithfully their verdict. As for the Beauties,† I am their most humble servant. What shall I say to Mr. Lowth, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Rolle, the reverend Mr. Brown, Seward, &c.? If I say, Messieurs! this is not the thing; write prose, write sermons, write nothing at all; they will disdain me, and my advice. What then would

* Epistle from Florence to Thomas Asheton, tutor to the earl of Plymouth. B.

† The epistle to Mr. Beccardt the Painter. B.

the sickly peer* have done, that spends so much time in admiring every thing that has four legs, and fretting at his own misfortune in having but two; and cursing his own politic head and feeble constitution, that won't let him be such a beast as he would wish? Mr. S. Jenyns now and then can write a good line or two—such as these—

Snatch us from all our little sorrows here,
Calm every grief, and dry each childish tear, &c.

I like Mr. Ashton Hervey's fable; and an ode (the last of all) by Mr. Mason, a new acquaintance of mine, whose Musæus too seems to carry with it the promise at least of something good to come. I was glad to see you distinguished who poor West was, before his charming ode,† and called it any thing rather than a Pindaric. The town is an owl, if it don't like lady Mary,‡ and I am surprised at it: we here are owls enough to think her eclogues very bad; but that I did not wonder at. Our present taste is sir T. Fitz-Osborne's Letters. I send you a bit of

* Lord Hervey. B.

† Monody on the death of queen Caroline. B.

‡ Lady Mary W. Montague's Poems. -B.

a thing for two reasons: first, because it is of one of your favourites, Mr. M. Green; and next, because I would do justice. The thought on which my second ode* turns is manifestly stole from hence: not that I knew it at the time, but, having seen this many years before, to be sure it imprinted itself on my memory, and, forgetting the author, I took it for my own. The subject was the Queen's Hermitage.

* * * * *

Though yet no palace grace the shore
 To lodge the pair you† should adore;
 Nor abbey's great in ruins rise,
 Royal equivalents for vice:
 Behold a grot in Delphic grove
 The Graces and the Muses love,
 A temple from vain-glory free;
 Whose goddess is Philosophy;
 Whose sides such licensed‡ idols crown,
 As Superstition would pull down:
 The only pilgrimage I know,
 That men of sense would choose to go,
 Which sweet abode, her wisest choice,
 Urania cheers with heavenly voice:
 While all the Virtues gather round
 To see her consecrate the ground.
 If thou, the god with winged feet,
 In council talk of this retreat;

* The Ode to Spring. B.

† Speaking to the Thames.

‡ The four beasts.

And jealous gods resentment show
At altars raised to men below :
Tell those proud lords of heaven, 'tis fit
Their house our heroes should admit.
While each exists (as poets sing)
A lazy, lewd, immortal thing ;
They must, or grow in disrepute,
With earth's first commoners recruit.

Needless it is in terms unskill'd
To praise whatever Boyle shall build.
Needless it is the bursts to name
Of men, monopolists of fame.
Four chiefs adorn the modest stone,
For virtue, as for learning, known.
The thinking sculpture helps to raise
Deep thoughts, the genti of the place :
To the mind's ear, and inward sight,
Their silence speaks, and shade gives light :
While insects from the threshold preach,
And minds disposed to musing teach ;
Proud of strong limbs and painted hues,
They perish by the slightest bruise,
Or maladies begun within
Destroy more slow life's frail machine :
From maggot-youth through change of state
They feel like us the turns of fate :
Some born to creep have lived to fly,
And changed earth's cells for dwellings high ;
And some, that did their six wings keep,
Before they died, been forced to creep.
They politics, like ours, profess :
The greater prey upon the less.
Some strain on foot huge loads to bring,
Some toil incessant on the wing :
Nor from their vigorous schemes desist
Till death ; and then are never miss'd.

Some frolick, marry, toil, increase,
Are sick and well, have war, and peace,
And, broke with age in half a day,
Yield to successors, and away.

* * * * *

LXXXIV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Dec. 19, 1753.

HAVE you read madame de Maintenon's letters? They are undoubtedly genuine; they begin very early in her life, before she married Scarron, and continue after the king's death to within a little while of her own: they bear all the marks of a noble spirit (in her adversity particularly) of virtue and unaffected devotion; insomuch, that I am almost persuaded she was actually married to Louis XIV. and never his mistress: and this not out of any policy or ambition, but conscience: for she was what we should call a bigot, yet with great good sense. In short, she was too good for a court. Misfortunes in the beginning of her life had formed her mind (naturally lively and impatient) to reflection and a habit of piety. She was always mise-

nable while she had the care of madame de Montespan's children; timid and very cautious of making use of that unlimited power she rose to afterwards, for fear of trespassing on the king's friendship for her; and after his death not at all afraid of meeting her own.

I do not know what to say to you with regard to Racine; it sounds to me as if any body should fall upon Shakspeare, who indeed lies infinitely more open to criticism of all kinds; but I should not care to be the person that undertook it. If you do not like Athaliah or Britannicus, there is no more to be said. I have done.

Bishop Hall's satires, called *Virgidemiæ*, are lately re-published. They are full of spirit and poetry; as much of the first as Dr. Donne, and far more of the latter: they were written at the university when he was about twenty-three years old, and in queen Elizabeth's time.

You do not say whether you have read the *Crito*.* I only recommend the dramatic part of the *Phædo* to you, not the argumentative. The subject of the *Erastæ* is good: it treats of that peculiar character and turn of mind which belongs to a true philosopher,

* Of Plato.

but it is shorter than one would wish. The Euthyphro I would not read at all.

LXXXV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Stoke, Jan. 1743.

I AM at present at Stoke, to which place I came at half an hour's warning upon the news I received of my mother's illness, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I arrived she was much better, and continues so. I shall therefore be very glad to make you a visit at Strawberry-Hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I am surprised at the print,* which far sur-

* A proof print of the Cul de Lampe, which Mr. Bentley designed for the elegy in a country church-yard, and which represents a village funeral: this occasioned the pleasant mistake of his two aunts. The remainder of the letter relates entirely to the projected publication of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were printed after by Dodsley the same year. The latter part of it, where he so vehemently declares against having his head prefixed to that work, will appear highly characteristic to those readers, who were personally acquainted with Mr. Gray. The print, which was taken from an original picture, painted by Eccardt, in Mr. Walpole's possession, was actually more than half engraved; but afterwards on this account suppressed.

passes my idea of London graving. The drawing itself was so finished, that I suppose it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts seeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying-ticket, and asked whether any body had left me a ring; and so they still conceive it to be, even with all their spectacles on. Heaven forbid they should suspect it to belong to any verses of mine, they would burn me for a poet. On my own part, I am satisfied, if this design of yours succeed so well as you intend it; and yet I know it will be accompanied with something not at all agreeable to me.—While I write this, I receive your second letter.—Sure, you are not out of your wits! This I know, if you suffer my head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a stop to any such design. Who is at the expense of engraving it, I know not; but if it be Dodsley, I will make up the loss to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper person, at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages, would be worse than the pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a frontispiece, without any warning, I believe

it would have given me a palsy: therefore I rejoice to have received this notice, and shall not be easy till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. I am extremely in earnest, and cannot bear even the idea.

I had written to Dodsley if I had not received yours, to tell him how little I liked the title which he meant to prefix; but your letter has put all that out of my head. If you think it necessary to print these explanations* for the use of people that have no eyes, I should be glad they were a little altered. I am, to my shame, in your debt for a long letter; but I cannot think of any thing else till you have set me at ease on this matter.

LXXXVI.

TO MR. MASON.†

Durham, Dec. 26, 1753.

A LITTLE while before I received your me-

* See the above-mentioned designs, where the explanations here alluded to are inserted.

† It was not till about the year 1747 that I had the happiness of being introduced to the acquaintance of Mr. Gray. Some very juvenile imitations of Milton's juvenile poems, which I had written a year or two before, and of which the monody on Mr. Pope's death was the principal, he then, at the request of one of my friends, was so obliging as to revise.

lancholy letter, I had been informed by Mr. Charles Avison of one of the sad events you mention.* I know what it is to lose persons that one's eyes and heart have long been used to; and I never desire to part with the remembrance of that loss, nor would wish you should.—It is something that you had a little time to acquaint yourself with the idea beforehand; and that your father suffered but little pain, the only thing that makes death terrible. After I have said this, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the disposition he has made of his affairs. I must (if you will suffer me to say so) call it great weakness; and yet perhaps your affliction for him is heightened by that very weakness; for I know it is possible to feel an additional sorrow for the faults of those we have loved, even where that fault has been greatly injurious to ourselves. Let me desire you not to expose yourself to any further danger in the midst of that scene of sickness and death; but withdraw as soon as possible to some place at a little distance in the country; for I do not, in the least, like the situation you are in. I do not attempt

* The death of my father, and of Dr. Marmaduke Prickett, a young physician of my own age, with whom I was brought up from infancy, who died of the same infectious fever.

to console you on the situation your fortune is left in; if it were far worse, the good opinion I have of you, tells me, you will never the sooner do any thing mean or unworthy of yourself; and consequently I cannot pity you on this account: but I sincerely do on the new loss you have had of a good and friendly man, whose memory I honour. I have seen the scene you describe, and know how dreadful it is: I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts; the deeper it is engraved the better.

INDEX.

<i>No.</i>		<i>Page</i>
I.	From Mr. West.—Complains of his friend's silence	5
II.	To Mr. West.—Answer to the former.—A translation of some lines from Statius	7
III.	From Mr. West.—Approbation of the version.—Ridicule on the Cambridge Collection of Verses on the Marriage of the Prince of Wales	9
IV.	To Mr. West.—On the little encouragement which he finds given to classical learning at Cambridge.—His aversion to metaphysical and mathematical studies	11
V.	From Mr. West.—Answer to the former, advises his correspondent not to give up poetry when he applies himself to the law	14
VI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Excuse for not writing to him, &c.	16
VII.	From Mr. West.—A poetical epistle addressed to his Cambridge friend, taken in part from Tibullus, and a prose letter of Mr. Pope	18
VIII.	To Mr. West.—Thanks him for his poetical epistle.—Complains of low spirits.—Lady Walpole's death, and his concern for Mr. H. Walpole	22
IX.	To Mr. Walpole.—How he spends his own time in the country.—Meets with Mr. Southern, the dramatic poet	24
X.	To Mr. Walpole.—Supposed manner in which Mr. Walpole spends his time in the country	26
XI.	From Mr. West.—Sends him a translation into Latin of a Greek epigram	28
XII.	To Mr. West.—A Latin epistle in answer to the foregoing	30
XIII.	From Mr. West.—On leaving the University, and removing to the Temple	32
XIV.	To Mr. West.—A Sapphic Ode, occasioned by the preceding letter, with a Latin postscript, concluding with an Aleaic fragment	33

No.	Page
XV. From Mr. West.—Thanks for his Ode, &c.—His idea of Sir Robert Walpole	36
XVI. To Mr. Walpole—Congratulates him on his new place.—Whimsical description of the quadrangle of Peter-House	37
XVII. To Mr. West.—On his own leaving the University	39
XVIII. From Mr. West.—Sends him a Latin Elegy in answer to Mr. Gray's Sapphic Ode	40
XIX. To his Mother.—His voyage from Dover.—Description of Calais.—Abbeville.—Amiens—Face of the country, and dress of the people	42
XX. To Mr. West.—Monuments of the kings of France at St. Denis, &c.—French opera and music, &c.—Actors, &c.	46
XXI. To Mr. West.—Palace of Versailles.—Its gardens and water-works.—Installation of the Knights du S. Esprit	51
XXII. To his Mother—Rheims.—Its Cathedral.—Disposition and amusements of its inhabitants	55
XXIII. To his Father.—Face of the country between Rheims and Dijon—Description of the latter.—Monastery of the Carthusians and Cistercians	59
XXIV.* To Mr. West—Lyons.—Beauty of its environs.—Roman antiquities	61
XXV. From Mr. West—His wishes to accompany his friend.—His retired life in London.—Address to his Lyre, in Latin Sapphics, on the prospect of Mr. Gray's return	64
XXVI. To his Mother—Lyons.—Excursion to the Grande Chartreuse—Solemn and romantic approach to it.—His reception there, and commendation of the monastery	66
XXVII. To his Father.—Geneva—Advantage of a free government exhibited in the very look off the people.—Beauty of the lake, and plenty of its fish	69
XXVIII. To his Mother.—Journey over the Alps to Turin.—Singular accident in passing them.—Method of travelling over Mount Cenis	72
XXIX. To Mr. West—Turin.—Its Carnival.—More of the views and scenery on the road to the Grande Chartreuse.—Wild and savage prospects amongst the Alps agreeable to Lavy's description	76

No.		Page
XXX.	To Mr. West.—Genoa.—Music.—The Doge.—Churches and the Palazzo Doria	80
XXXI.	To his Mother.—Paintings at Modena.—Bologna.—Beauty and richness of Lombardy	83
XXXII.	To his Mother.—The Apennines.—Florence and its gallery	86
XXXIII.	To Mr. West.—Journey from Genoa to Florence.—Elegiac verses occasioned by the sight of the plains where the battle of Trebia was fought	90
XXXIV.	From Mr. West.—Latin Elegy, expressing his wishes to see Italy and Greece	91
XXXV.	To his Mother.—Death of the pope.—Intended departure for Rome.—First and pleasing appearance of an Italian spring	92
XXXVI.	To his Mother.—Cathedral of Sienna.—Viterbo.—Distant sight of Rome.—The Tiber.—Entrance into the city.—St. Peter's.—Introduction of the Cardinal d'Auvergne into the conclave	94
XXXVII.	To his Mother.—Illumination of St. Peter's on Good-Friday, &c.	99
XXXVIII.	To Mr. West.—Comic account of the palace of the duke of Modena at Tivoli.—The Anio.—Its cascade.—Situation of the town.—Villas of Horace and Mæcenas, and other remains of antiquity.—Modern aqueducts.—A grand Roman ball	101
XXXIX.	To Mr. West.—An Alcaic ode.—Ludicrous allusion to ancient customs.—Albano and its lake.—Castel Gondolfo.—Prospect from the palace; an observation of Mr. Walpole's on the views in that part of Italy.—Latin inscriptions, ancient and modern	106
XI.	To his Mother.—Road to Naples.—Beautiful situation of that city.—Its bay.—Of Baize, and several other antiquities.—Some account of the first discovery of an ancient town, not known to be Herculanæum	112
XII.	To his Father.—Departure from Rome and return to Florence.—No likelihood of the conclave's rising.—Some of the cardinals dead.—Description of the Pretender, his sons, and court.—Procession at Naples.—Sight of the king and queen.—Mildness of the air at Florence	115
XIII.	From Mr. West.—On his quitting the Temple, and reason for it	119
XIV.	To Mr. West.—Answer to the foregoing letter.	

No.		Page
	—Some account of Naples and its environs, and of Mr. Walpole's and his return to Florence	121
XLIV.	To his Mother.—Excursion to Bologna.—Election of a pope; description of his person, with an odd speech which he made to the cardinals in the conclave	127
XLV.	To Mr. West.—Description in Latin hexameters of the sudden rising of Monte Nuovo near Puzzoli, and of the destruction which attended it	130
XLVI.	To his Father.—Uncertainty of the route he shall take in his return to England.—Magnificence of the Italians in their reception of strangers, and parsimony when alone.—The great applause which the new pope meets with.—One of his <i>bon mots</i>	135
XLVII.	To his Father.—Total want of amusement at Florence, occasioned by the late emperor's funeral not being public.—A procession to avert the ill effects of a late inundation.—Intention of going to Venice.—An invasion from the Neapolitans apprehended.—The inhabitants of Tuscany dissatisfied with the government	137
XLVIII.	To Mr. West.—The time of his departure from Florence determined.—Alteration in his temper and spirits.—Difference between an Italian fair and an English one.—A farewell to Florence and its prospects in Latin hexameters.—Imitation, in the same language, of an Italian sonnet	140
XLIX.	From Mr. West.—His spirits not as yet improved by country air.—Has begun to read Tacitus, but not to relish him	144
L.	To Mr. West.—Earnest hopes for his friend's better health, as the warm weather comes on.—Defence of Tacitus and his character.—Of the new Dunciad.—Sends him a speech from the first scene of his Agrippina	145
LI.	From Mr. West.—Criticisms on his friend's tragic style.—Latin hexameters on his own cough	148
LII.	To Mr. West.—Thanks for his verses.—On Joseph Andrews.—Defence of old words in tragedy	150
LIII.	From Mr. West.—Answer to the former, on the subject of antiquated expressions	155
LIV.	To Mr. West.—Has laid aside his tragedy.—Difficulty of translating Tacitus	158
LV.	From Mr. West.—With an English ode on the approach of May	160

No.	Page
LVI.	To Mr. West.—Critiques his ode.—Of his own classical studies - 162
LVII.	From Mr. West.—Answer to the foregoing - 164
LVIII.	To Mr. West.—Of his own peculiar species of melancholy.—Inscription for a wood in Greek hexameters.—Argument and exordium of a Latin heroic epistle from Sophonisba to Massinissa - 166
LIX.	To Dr. Wharton, on taking his degree of Bachelor of Civil Law - 169
LX.	To Dr. Wharton.—Ridicule on university laziness.—Of Dr. Akenside's Poem on the Pleasures of Imagination - 171
LXI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Ludicrous description of the Scottish army's approach to the capital.—Animadversions on Pope - 174
LXII.	To Dr. Wharton.—His amusements in town.—Reflections on riches.—Character of Aristotle - 176
LXIII.	To Mr. Walpole.—Observations on his tragedy of Agrippina.—Admirable picture of true philosophy - 180
LXIV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Ridicule on Cæsar's Observations on Cicero.—On the modern Platonic dialogue.—Account of his own and Mr. West's poetical compositions - 183
LXV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Criticisms on Mr. Spence's Polymetis - 187
LXVI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Ludicrous compliment of condolence on the death of his favourite cat, enclosing an ode on that subject - 191
LXVII.	To Dr. Wharton.—Loss by fire of a house in Gornhill.—On Diodorus Siculus.—M. Gresset's Poems.—Thomson's Castle of Indolence.—Ode to a Water Nymph, with a character of its author - 192
LXVIII.	To Dr. Wharton.—More on M. Gresset.—Account of his own projected poem on the alliance between government and education - 195
LXIX.	To Dr. Wharton.—Character of M. de Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Loix - 197
LXX.	To Dr. Wharton.—Account of books continued.—Crevillon's Catalina.—Birch's State Papers.—Of his own studies, and a table of Greek chronology, which he was then forming - 198
LXXI.	To Dr. Wharton.—Ludicrous account of the Duke of Newcastle's installation at Cambridge.—On the ode then performed, and there concerning the author of it - 201

No.		Page
LXXII.	To his Mother.—Consolatory on the death of her sister	203
LXXIII.	To Mr. Walpole.—Encloses his Elegy in a Country Church-yard	205
LXXIV.	To Dr. Wharton.—Wishes to be able to pay him a visit at Durham.—On Dr. Middleton's death.—Some account of the first volumes of Bufon's <i>Histoire Naturelle</i>	206
LXXV.	To Dr. Wharton.—On the ill reception which his Long Story met with in town when handed about in manuscript, and how much his Elegy in a Country Church-yard was applauded	209
LXXVI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Desires him to give his Elegy to Mr. Dodsley to be printed immediately, in order to prevent its publication in a magazine	210
LXXVII.	To Mr. Walpole.—A letter of thanks for Mr. Walpole's care of his literary productions	212
LXXVIII.	To Mr. Walpole.—Desires his opinion of the <i>Elfrida</i> of Mr. Mason.—Proposes some alterations in his Elegy	214
LXXIX.	To Mr. Walpole.—Remarks on the Elegy of Mr. Lyttelton, and likewise on some of his own productions	216
LXXX.	To Mr. Walpole.—Humorous inquiry into the state of Mr. Walpole's forthcoming publications, &c.	218
LXXXI.	To Mr. Walpole.—With his Hymn to Adversity.—Remarks on Dr. C. Middleton's Essay on Miracles	220
LXXXII.	To Mr. Walpole.—With a promise of shortly sending his <i>Pindaric Ode</i>	223
LXXXIII.	To Mr. Walpole.—Remarks on Dodsley's Collection of Poems, and on several literary characters of the time, together with an extract from a poem	225
LXXXIV.	To Dr. Wharton.—Of Madame Maintenon's character and letters.—His high opinion of M. Racine.—Of Bishop Hall's Satires, and of a few of Plato's Dialogues	232
LXXXV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Concerning the intention of publishing Mr. Bentley's designs for his poems.—Refuses to have his own portrait prefixed to that work	234
LXXXVI.	To Mr. Mason.—On the death of his father	236

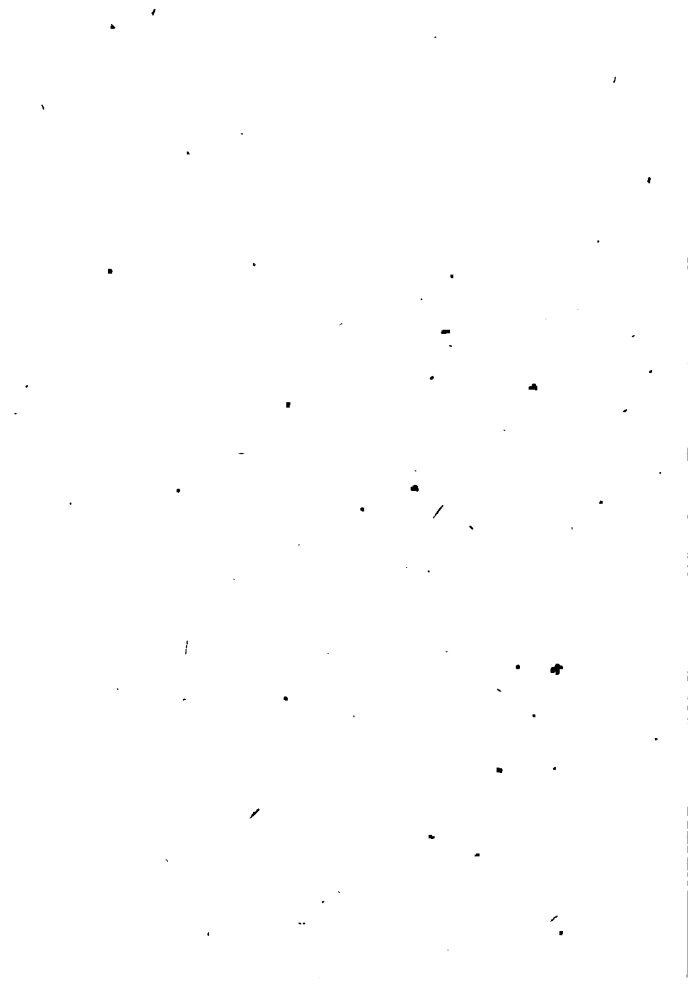
THE
LETTERS
OF
THOMAS GRAY.

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

FROM THE
WALPOLE AND MASON COLLECTIONS.

VOL. II.

MDCCCXX.



LETTERS
OF
THOMAS GRAY.

LXXXVII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Stoke, Sept. 18, 1754.

I AM glad you enter into the spirit of Strawberry-Castle; it has a purity and propriety of Gothicism in it (with very few exceptions) that I have not seen elsewhere. My lord Radnor's vagaries I see did not keep you from doing justice to his situation, which far surpasses every thing near it; and I do not know a more laughing scene than that about Twickenham and Richmond. Dr. Akenside, I perceive, is no conjurer in architecture, especially when he talks of the ruins of Persepolis, which are no more

Gothic than they are Chinese. The Egyptian style (see Dr. Pococke, not his discourses, but his prints) was apparently the mother of the Greek; and there is such a similitude between the Egyptian and those Persian ruins, as gave Diodorus room to affirm, that the old buildings of Persia were certainly performed by Egyptian artists. As to the other part of your friend's opinion, that the Gothic manner is the Saracen or Moorish, he has a great authority to support him, that of sir Christopher Wren; and yet I cannot help thinking it undoubtedly wrong. The palaces in Spain I never saw but in description, which gives us little or no idea of things; but the doge's palace at Venice I have seen, which is in the Arabesque manner: and the houses of Barbary you may see in Dr. Shaw's book, not to mention abundance of other eastern buildings in Turkey, Persia, &c. that we have views of; and they seem plainly to be corruptions of the Greek architecture, broke into little parts indeed, and covered with little ornaments, but in a taste very distinguishable from that which we call Gothic. There is one thing that runs through the Moorish buildings, that an imitator would certainly have been first struck with, and

would have tried to copy; and that is the cupolas which cover every thing, baths, apartments, and even kitchens; yet who ever saw a Gothic cupola? It is a thing plainly of Greek original. I do not see any thing but the slender spires that serve for steeples, which may perhaps be borrowed from the Saracen minarets on their mosques.

I take it ill you should say any thing against the Mole, it is a reflection I see cast at the Thames. Do you think that rivers, which have lived in London and its neighbourhood all their days, will run roaring and tumbling about like your tramontane torrents in the north? No, they only glide and whisper.

LXXXVIII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 9, 1755.

I do not pretend to humble any one's pride; I love my own too well to attempt it. As to mortifying their vanity, it is too easy and too mean a task for me to delight in. You are very good in showing so much sensibi-

lity on my account; but be assured my taste for praise is not like that of children for fruit; if there were nothing but medlars and blackberries in the world, I could be very well content to go without any at all. I dare say that Mason, though some years younger than I, was as little elevated with the approbation of lord * * and lord * *, as I am mortified by their silence.

With regard to publishing, I am not so much against the thing itself, as of publishing this ode alone.* I have two or three ideas more in my head; what is to come of them? Must they too come out in the shape of little sixpenny flams, dropping one after another till Mr. Dodsley thinks fit to collect them with Mr. This's Song, and Mr. Toth-er's epigram into a pretty volume? I am sure Mason must be sensible of this, and therefore cannot mean what he says; neither am I quite of your opinion with regard to strophe and antistrophe;† setting aside the

* His Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

† He often made the same remark to me in conversation, which led me to form the last ode of *Caractacus* in shorter stanzas: but we must not imagine that he thought the regular Pindaric method without its use; though as he justly says, when formed in long stanzas, it does not fully succeed in point of effect on the ear: for there was nothing which he more disliked than that chain of ir-

difficulty of execution, methinks it has little or no effect on the ear, which scarce perceives the regular return of metres at so great a distance from one another: to make it succeed, I am persuaded the stanzas must not consist of above nine lines each at the most.—Pindar has several such odes.

LXXXIX.

TO MR. STONHEWER.*

August 21, 1745.

I THANK you for your intelligence about Herculaneum, which was the first news I received of it. I have since turned over

gular stanzas which Cowley introduced. and falsely called Pindaric; and which, from the extreme facility of execution, produced a number of miserable imitators. Had the regular return of strophe, antistrophe, and epode no other merit than that of extreme difficulty, it ought, on this very account, to be valued; because we well know that "easy writing is no easy reading." It is also to be remarked, that Mr. Congreve, who (though without any lyrical powers) first introduced the regular Pindaric form into the English language, made use of the short stanzas which Mr. Gray here recommends. See his ode to the queen

* Afterwards and tor of excise. His friendship with Mr. Gray commenced at college, and continued till the death of the latter.

monsignor Baiardi's book,* where I have learned how many grains of modern wheat the Roman congius, in the capitol, holds, and how many thousandth parts of an inch the Greek foot consisted of more (or less, for I forgot which) than our own. He proves also by many affecting examples, that an antiquary may be mistaken: that, for any thing any body knows, this place under ground might be some other place, and not Herculaneum; but nevertheless, that he can show for certain, that it was this place and no other place; that it is hard to say which of the several Hercules's was the founder; therefore (in the third volume) he promises to give us the memoirs of them all; and after that, if we do not know what to think of the matter, he will tell us. There is a great deal of wit too, and satire, and verses, in the book, which is intended chiefly for the information of the French king, who will be greatly edified without doubt.

* I believe the book here ridiculed was published by the authority of the king of Naples. But afterwards, on finding how ill qualified the author was to execute the task, the business of describing the antiquities found at Herculaneum was put into other hands; who have certainly, as far as they have gone, performed it much better.

I am much obliged to you also for Voltaire's performance; it is very unequal, as he is apt to be in all but his dramas, and looks like the work of a man that will admire his retreat and his Lemman-Lake no longer than till he finds an opportunity to leave it:* however, though there be many parts which I do not like, yet it is in several places excellent, and every where above mediocrity. As you have the politeness to pretend impatience, and desire I would communicate, and all that, I annex a piece of the prophecy;† which must be true at least, as it was wrote so many hundred years after the events.

XC.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, March 25, 1756.

THOUGH I had no reasonable excuse for myself before I received your last letter, yet since that time I have had a pretty good one; having been taken up in quarrelling with

* I do not recollect the title of this poem, but it was a small one which M. de Voltaire wrote when he first settled at Ferney.

† The second antistrophe and epode, with a few lines of the third strophe of his ode, entitled the Bard, were here inserted.

Peter-house,* and in removing myself from thence to Pembroke. This may be looked upon as a sort of æra in a life so barren of events as mine; yet I shall treat it in Voltaire's manner, and only tell you that I left my lodgings because the rooms were noisy, and the people of the house uncivil. This is all I would choose to have said about it; but if you in private should be curious enough to enter into a particular detail of facts and minute circumstances, the bearer, who was witness to them, will probably satisfy you. All I shall say more is, that I am for the present extremely well lodged here, and as quiet as in the Grande Chartreuse; and that every body (even Dr Long himself) are as civil as they could be to Mary† of Valens in person.

* The reason of Mr. Gray's changing his college which is here only glanced at, was in few words this: two or three young men of fortune, who lived in the same staircase, had for some time intentionally disturbed him with their riots and carried their ill behaviour so far as frequently to awaken him at midnight. After having borne with their insults longer than might reasonably have been expected even from a man of less warmth of temper, Mr. Gray complained to the governing part of the society; and not thinking that his removal was sufficiently attended to, quitted the college. The slight manner in which he mentions this affair, when writing to one of his most intimate friends, certainly does honour to the placability of his disposition.

† Foundress of the College.

With regard to any advice I can give you about your being physician to the hospital, I frankly own it ought to give way to a much better judge, especially so disinterested a one as Dr. Heberden. I love refusals no more than you do. But as to your fears of effluvia, I maintain that one sick rich patient has more of pestilence and putrefaction about him than a whole ward of sick poor.

The similitude between the Italian republics and those of ancient Greece has often struck me, as it does you. I do not wonder that Sully's Memoirs have highly entertained you; but cannot agree with you in thinking him or his master two of the best men in the world. The king was indeed one of the best-natured men that ever lived; but it is owing only to chance that his intended marriage with madame d'Estreés, or with the marquis de Verneuil, did not involve him and the kingdom in the most inextricable confusion; and his design upon the princess of Condé (in his old age) was worse still. As to the minister, his base application to Concini. after the murder of Henry, has quite ruined him in my esteem, and destroyed all the merit of that honest surly pride for which I honoured him be-

fore; yet I own that, as kings and ministers go, they were both extraordinary men. Pray look at the end of Birch's state papers of sir J. Edmonds, for the character of the French court at that time; it is written by sir George Carew.

You should have received Mason's present* last Saturday. I desire you to tell me your critical opinion of the new odes, and also whether you have found out two lines which he has inserted in his third to a friend, which are superlative.† We do not expect the world, which is just going to be invaded, will bestow much attention on them; if you hear any thing, you will tell us.

* The four odes which I had just published separately.

† I should leave the reader to guess (if he thought it worth his while) what this couplet was, which is here commended so much beyond its merit, did not the ode conclude with a compliment to Mr. Gray, in which part he might probably look for it, as those lines were written with the greater care. To secure, therefore, my friend from any imputation of vanity, whatever becomes of myself, I shall here insert the passage,

While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners grey.

XCI.

TO DR. WHARTON.

June 14, 1756.

THOUGH I allow abundance for your kindness and partiality to me, I am yet much pleased with the good opinion you seem to have of the Bard: I have not, however, done a word more than the little you have seen, having been in a very listless, unpleasant, and *inutile* state of mind for this long time, for which I shall beg you to prescribe me somewhat strengthening and agglutinant, lest it turn to a confirmed phthisis.

I recommend two little French books to you, one called *Memoirs de M. de la Porte*; it has all the air of simplicity and truth, and contains some few very extraordinary facts relating to Anne of Austria and cardinal Mazarine. The other is in two small volumes, "*Memoires de Madame Staal*." The facts are no great matter, but the manner and vivacity make them interesting. She was a sort of confidante to the late duchess of Maine, and imprisoned a long time on her account during the regency.

I ought before now to have thanked you for your kind offer, which I mean soon to accept, for a reason which to be sure can be none to you and Mrs. Wharton; and therefore I think it my duty to give you notice of it. I have told you already of my mental ailments; and it is a very possible thing also that I may be bodily ill again in town, which I would not choose to be in a dirty inconvenient lodging, where, perhaps, my nurse might stifle me with a pillow; and therefore it is no wonder if I prefer your house: but I tell you of this in time, that if either of you are frightened at the thoughts of a sick body, you may make a handsome excuse, and save yourselves this trouble. You are not however to imagine that my illness is *in esse*; no, it is only *in posse*; otherwise I should be scrupulous of bringing it home to you. I think I shall be with you in about a fortnight.

XCII.

TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, July 25, 1756.

I FEEL a contrition for my long silence; and yet perhaps it is the last thing you trouble

your head about. Nevertheless, I will be as sorry as if you took it ill. I am sorry too to see you so punctilious as to stand upon answers, and never to come near me till I have regularly left my name at your door, like a mercer's wife, that imitates people who go a visiting. I would forgive you this, if you could possibly suspect I were doing any thing that I liked better; for then your formality might look like being piqued at my negligence, which has somewhat in it like kindness: but you know I am at Stoke, hearing, seeing, doing absolutely nothing. Not such a nothing as you do at Tunbridge, chequered and diversified with a succession of fleeting colours; but heavy, lifeless, without form and void; sometimes almost as black as the moral of Voltaire's Lisbon,* which angers you so. I have had no more muscular inflations, and am only troubled with this depression of mind. You would not expect therefore I should give you any account of my *verve*, which is at best (you know) of so delicate a constitution, and has such weak nerves, as not to stir out of its chamber above three days in a year. But I shall inquire after yours, and why it is off

* His poem "Sur la Destruction de Lisbon," published about that time.

again? It has certainly worse nerves than mine, if your reviewers have frightened it. Sure I (not to mention a score of your other critics) am something a better judge than all the man-midwives and Presbyterian parsons* that ever were born. Pray give me leave to ask you, do you find yourself tickled with the commendations of such people? (for you have your share of these too) I dare say not; your vanity has certainly a better taste. And can then the censure of such critics move you? I own it is an impertinence in these gentry to talk of one at all either in good or in bad; but this we must all swallow: I mean not only we that write, but all the *we's* that ever did any thing to be talked of.

While I am writing I receive yours, and rejoice to find that the genial influences of this fine season, which produce nothing in me, have hatched high and unimaginable fantasies in you.† I see, methinks, as I sit on Snowdon, some glimpse of Mona and her haunted shades, and hope we shall be very good neighbours. Any Druidical anecdotes

* The Reviewers, at the time, were supposed to be of these professions.

† I had sent him my first idea of Caractacus, drawn out in a short argument.

that I can meet with, I will be sure to send you when I return to Cambridge; but I cannot pretend to be learned without books, or to know the Druids from modern bishops at this distance. I can only tell you not to go and take Mona for the Isle of Man: it is Anglesey, a tract of plain country, very fertile, but picturesque only from the view it has of Caernarvonshire, from which it is separated by the Menai, a narrow arm of the sea. Forgive me for supposing in you such a want of erudition.

I congratulate you on our glorious successes in the Mediterranean. Shall we go in time, and hire a house together in Switzerland? It is a fine poetical country to look at, and nobody there will understand a word we say or write.

XCIII. .

TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, May, 1757.

You are so forgetful of me that I should not forgive it, but that I suppose Caractacus may be the better for it. Yet I hear nothing from him neither, in spite of his promises:

there is no faith in man, no not in a Welshman; and yet Mr. Parry* has been here, and scratched out such ravishing blind harmony, such tunes of a thousand years old, with names enough to choak you, as have set all this learned body a dancing, and inspired them with due reverence for my old Bard his countryman, when he shall appear. Mr. Parry, you must know, has put my ode in motion again, and has brought it at last to a conclusion. 'Tis to him, therefore, that you owe the treat which I send you enclosed; namely, the breast and merry-thought, and rump too of the chicken which I have been chewing so long, that I would give the world for neck-beef or cow-heel.

You will observe, in the beginning of this thing, some alterations of a few words, partly for improvement, and partly to avoid repetitions of like words and rhymes; yet I have not got rid of them all; the six last lines of the fifth stanza are new; tell me whether they will do. I am well aware of many weakly things towards the conclusion, but I hope the end itself will do; give me your full and true opinion, and that not upon de-

* A capital performer on the Welsh harp, and who was either born blind, or had been so from his infancy.

liberation, but forthwith. Mr. Hurd himself allows that *Lyon port* is not too bold for queen Elizabeth.

I have got the old Scotch ballad on which Douglas* was founded; it is divine, and as long as from hence to Aston. Have you never seen it? Aristotle's best rules are observed in it, in a manner that shows the author had never read Aristotle. It begins in the fifth act of the play: you may read it two thirds through without guessing what it is about; and yet, when you come to the end, it is impossible not to understand the whole story. I send you the two first stanzas.

* * * * *

* He had a high opinion of this first drama of Mr. Home. In a letter to another friend, dated August 10, this year, he says, "I am greatly struck with the tragedy of Douglas, though it has infinite faults. The author seems to me to have retrieved the true language of the stage, which had been lost for these hundred years; and there is one scene (between Matilda and the old peasant) so masterly, that it strikes me blind to all the defects in the world." The ballad, which he here applauds, is to be found in Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, a work published after the date of this letter.

XCIV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Stoke, July 11, 1757.

I WILL not give you the trouble of sending your chaise for me. I intend to be with you on Wednesday in the evening. If the press stands still all this time for me, to be sure it is dead in child-bed.

I do not love notes, though you see I had resolved to put two or three.* They are signs of weakness and obscurity. If a thing cannot be understood without them, it had better be not understood at all. If you will be vulgar, and pronounce it *Lunnun*, instead of London,† I can't help it. Caradoc I have private reasons against; and besides it is in reality Caràdoc, and will not stand in the verse.

I rejoice you can fill all your *vuides*: the Maintenon could not, and that was her great misfortune. Seriously though, I congratulate you on your happiness, and seem to understand it. The receipt is obvious: it is

* To the Bard. B.

† "Ye towers of Julia, London's lasting shame." B. v. 87. B.

only, Have something to do; but how few can apply it! Adieu!

XCV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

I AM so charmed with the two specimens of Erse poetry, that I cannot help giving you the trouble to inquire a little farther about them, and should wish to see a few lines of the original, that I may form some slight idea of the language, the measures, and the rhythm.

Is there any thing known of the author or authors, and of what antiquity are they supposed to be?

Is there any more to be had of equal beauty, or at all approaching to it?

I have often been told that the poem called Hardicnute (which I always admired, and still admire) was the work of somebody that lived a few years ago.* This I do not at all

* It has been supposed the work of a lady of the name of Wardlaw, who died in Scotland not many years ago, but upon no better evidence, than that I could ever learn, than that a copy of the poem with some erasures was found among her papers after her death. No proof surely of its original composition, as few but persons of

believe, though it has evidently been retouched in places by some modern hand: but, however, I am authorized by this report to ask, whether the two poems in question are certainly antique and genuine. I make this inquiry in quality of an antiquary, and am not otherwise concerned about it: for, if I were sure that any one now living in Scotland had written them to divert himself and laugh at the credulity of the world, I would undertake a journey into the Highlands only for the pleasure of seeing him.

XCVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

I HAVE been very ill this week with a great cold and a fever, and, though now in a way to be well, am like to be confined some days longer: whatever you will send me that is new or old, and *long*, will be received as a charity. Rousseau's people do not interest me; there is but one character and one style in them all; I do not know their faces

business, which women seldom are, take the precaution of docketting, or writing "Copy" upon every thing they may transcribe. B.

asunder. I have no esteem for their persons or conduct, am not touched with their passions; and as to their story, I do not believe a word of it—not because it is improbable, but because it is absurd. If I had any little propensity, it was to Julie; but now she has gone and (so hand over head) married that monsieur de Wolmar, I take her for a *vraie Suisse*, and do not doubt but she had taken a cup too much, like her lover.* All this does not imply that I will not read it out, when you can spare the rest of it.

XCVII.

TO MR. HURD.

Stoke, August 25, 1757.

I do not know why you should thank me for what you had a right and title to;† but

* Were not the public already in possession of Mr. Gray's opinion of the *Nouvelle Heloise*, in his letters published by Mr. Mason—how would such a criticism, from such a critic, astonish all those more happily constituted readers, who, capable of appreciating varied excellence, have perhaps read with equal delight the exquisite odes of the one author and the extraordinary and (with all its faults) inimitable romance of the other. B.

† A present of his two Pindaric odes just then published.

attribute it to the excess of your politeness; and the more so, because almost no one else has made me the same compliment. As your acquaintance in the university (you say) do me the honour to *admire*, it would be ungenerous in me not to give them notice, that they are doing a very unfashionable thing; for all people of condition are agreed not to admire, nor even to understand. One very great man, writing to an acquaintance of his and mine, says that he had read them seven or eight times; and that now, when he next sees him, he shall not have above *thirty questions* to ask. Another (a peer) believes that the last stanza of the second ode relates to king Charles the first and Oliver Cromwell. Even my friends tell me they do not *succeed*, and write me moving topics of consolation on that head. In short, I have heard of nobody but an actor and a doctor of divinity that profess their esteem for them.* Oh yes, a lady of quality (a

* This was written August 25, 1757. An extract from a letter of Mr Gray to Dr. Wharton, dated October 7, 1757, mentions another admirer whom he knew how to value. "Dr. Warburton is come to town, and I am told likes them extremely; he says the world never passed so just an opinion upon any thing as upon them: for that in other things they have affected to like or dislike: whereas here they own they do not understand, which he looks upon

friend of Mason's) who is a great reader. She knew there was a compliment to Dryden, but never suspected there was any thing said about Shakspeare or Milton, till it was explained to her; and wishes that there had been titles prefixed to tell what they were about.

From this mention of Mason's name, you may think, perhaps, we are great correspondents. No such thing; I have not heard from him these two months. I will be sure to scold in my own name, as well as in yours. I rejoice to hear you are so ripe for the press, and so voluminous; not for my own sake only, whom you flatter with the hopes of seeing your labours both public and private, but for yours too; for to be employed is to be happy. This principle of mine (and I am convinced of its truth) has, as usual, no influence on my practice. I am alone, and *ennuyé* to the last degree, yet do nothing. Indeed I have one excuse; my health (which

to be very true; but yet thinks they understand them as well as Milton or Shakspeare, whom they are obliged, by fashion, to admire. Mr. Garrick's complimentary verses to me you have seen; I am told they were printed in the Chronicle of last Saturday. The Critical Review is in raptures; but mistakes the *Molian Lyre* for the Harp of *Molus*, and on this pleasant error founds both a compliment and a criticism. This is all I heard that signifies any thing."

you have so kindly inquired after) is not extraordinary, ever since I came hither. It is no great malady, but several little ones, that seem brewing no good to me. It will be a particular pleasure to me to hear whether content dwells in Leicestershire, and how she entertains herself there. Only do not be too happy, nor forget entirely the quiet ugliness of Cambridge.

XCVIII.

TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, Sept. 28, 1757.

I HAVE (as I desired Mr. Stenhewer to tell you) read over *Caractacus* twice, not with pleasure only, but with emotion. You may say what you will; but the contrivance, the manners, the interests, the passions, and the expression, go beyond the dramatic part* of your *Elfrida*,

* In the manuscript now before him, Mr. Gray had only the first ode, the others were not then written; and although the dramatic part was brought to a conclusion, yet it was afterwards in many places altered. He was mistaken with regard to the opinion the world would have about it. That world, which usually loves to be led in such matters, rather than form an opinion to itself, was taught a different sentiment; and one of its leaders went so far as

many many leagues. I even say (though you will think me a bad judge of this) that the *world* will like it better. I am struck with the chorus, who are not there merely to sing and dance, but bear throughout a principal part in the action; and have (beside the *costume*, which is excellent) as much a character of their own, as any other person. I am charmed with their priestly pride and obstinacy, when, after all is lost, they resolve to confront the Roman general, and spit in his face. But now I am going to tell you what touches me most from the beginning. The first opening is greatly improved: the curiosity of Didius is now a very natural reason for dwelling on each particular of the scene before him; nor is the description at all too long. I am glad to find the two young men are Cartismandua's sons. They interest me far more. I love people of condition. They were men before that nobody

to declare, that he never knew a second work fall so much below a first from the same hand. To oppose Mr. Gray's judgment to his, I must own gives me some satisfaction; and to enjoy it, I am willing to risk that imputation of vanity, which may probably fall to my share for having published this letter. I must add, however, that some of my friends advised it for the sake of the more *general* criticisms which they thought too valuable to be suppressed.

knew: ~~one~~ could not make them a bow if one had met them at a public place.

I always admired that interruption of the Druids to Evelina, *Peace, virgin, peace, &c.* and chiefly the *abstract idea personified* (to use the words of a critic) at the end of it. That of Caractacus, *Would save my queen, &c.* and still more that, *I know it, reverend fathers, 'tis Heaven's high will, &c. to I've done, begin the rites!* This latter is exemplary for the expression (always the great point with me); I do not mean by expression the mere choice of words, but the whole dress, fashion, and arrangement of a thought. Here, in particular, it is the brokenness, the ungrammatical position, the total subversion of the period that charms me. All that ushers in the incantation from *Try we yet, what holiness can do*, I am delighted with in quite another way; for this is pure poetry, as it ought to be, forming the proper transition, and leading on the mind to that still purer poetry that follows it.

In the beginning of the succeeding act, I admire the chorus again, *Is it not now the hour, the holy hour, &c.* and their evasion of a lie, *Say'st thou, proud boy, &c.* and *sleep with the unsumm'd silver*, which is an example of a dramatic simile. The sudden appear-

ance of Caractacus, the pretended respect and admiration of Vellinus, and the probability of his story, the distrust of the Druids, and their reasoning with Caractacus, and particularly that *'Tis meet thou shouldst, thou art a king, &c.* and *Mark me, prince, the time will come, when destiny, &c.* are well, and happily imagined. Apropos, of the last striking passage I have mentioned, I am going to make a digression.

When we treat a subject, where the manners are almost lost in antiquity, our stock of ideas must needs be small; and nothing betrays our poverty more, than the returning to, and harping frequently on, one image. It was therefore I thought you should omit some lines before, though good in themselves, about the *scythed car*, that the passage now before us might appear with greater lustre when it came; and in this I see you have complied with me. But there are other ideas here and there still, that occur too often, particularly about *the oaks*, some of which I would discard to make way for the rest.

But the subjects I speak of to compensate (and more than compensate) that unavoidable poverty, have one great advantage, when they fall into good hands. They

leave an unbounded liberty to pure imagination and fiction (our favourite provinces), where no critic can molest, or antiquary gainsay us; and yet (to please me) these fictions must have some affinity, some seeming *connexion*, with that little we really know of the character and customs of the people. For example, I never heard in my days that midnight and the moon were sisters; that they carried rods of ebony and gold, or met to whisper on the top of a mountain: but now I could lay my life it is all true; and do not doubt it will be found so in some pantheón of the Druids, that is to be discovered in the library at Herculanæum. . The *Car of Destiny and Death*, is a very noble invention of the same class, and, as far as that goes, is so fine, that it makes me more delicate, than perhaps I should be, about the close of it. *Andraste sailing on the wings of Fame*, that snatches the wreaths from oblivion to hang them on her loftiest Amaranth, though a clear and beautiful piece of *unknown* mythology, has too *Greek* an air to give me perfect satisfaction.

Now I proceed. The preparation to the chorus, though so much akin to that in the former act, is excellent. The remarks of

Evelina and her suspicions of the brothers, mixed with a secret inclination to the younger of them (though, I think, her part throughout wants re-touching) yet please me much, and the contrivance of the following scene much more. *Masters of Wisdom*! no, &c. I always admired; as I do the rocking stone, and the distress of Elidurus. Evelina's examination of him is a well invented scene, and will be, with a little pains, a very touching one; but the introduction of Arviragus is superlative. I am not sure whether those few lines of his short narrative, *My strength repaired, it boots not, that I tell*, &c. do not please me as much as any thing in the whole drama. The sullen bravery of Elidurus, the menaces of the chorus, that *Think not, religion*, &c. the trumpet of the Druids, that *I'll follow him, though in my chains*, &c. *Hast thou a brother*, no, &c. the placability of the chorus, when they see the motives of Elidurus's obstinacy, give me great contentment: so do the reflections of the Druid on the necessity of lustration, and the reasons for Vellinus's easy escape; but I would not have him *seize on a spear*, nor *issue hasty through the cavern's mouth*. Why should he not steal away, unasked and unmissed, till the hurry of passions in those,

that should have guarded him, was a little abated? But I chiefly admire the two speeches of Elidurus; *Ah, Vellinus, is this then, &c.* and *Ye do gaze on me, Fathers, &c.* the manner in which the chorus reply to him is very fine; but the image at the end wants a little mending. The next scene is highly moving! it is so very good, that I must have it made yet better.

Now for the last act. I do not know what you would have, but to me the design and contrivance of it is at least equal to any part of the whole. The short-lived triumph of the Britons, the address of Caractacus to the Roman victims, Evelina's discovery of the ambush, the mistake of the Roman fires, for the rising sun, the death of Arviragus, the interview between Didius and Caractacus, his mourning over his dead son, his parting speech (in which you have made all the use of Tacitus that your plan would admit), every thing, in short, but that little dispute between Didius and him; *'Tis well; and therefore to increase that reverence, &c.* down to *Give me a moment* (which must be omitted, or put in the mouth of the Druids), I approve in the highest degree. If I should find any fault with the last act, it could only be with trifles and little expressions. If

you make any alterations, I fear it will never improve it; I mean as to the plan. I send you back the two last sheets, because you bid me. I reserve my nibblings and minutiae for another day.

XCIX.

TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, Dec. 19, 1757.

A LIFE spent out of the world has its hours of despondence, its inconveniences, its sufferings, as numerous and as real, though not quite of the same sort, as a life spent in the midst of it. The power we have, when we will exert it over our own minds, joined to a little strength and consolation, nay, a little pride we catch from those that seem to love us, is our only support in either of these conditions. I am sensible I cannot return you more of this assistance than I have received from you; and can only tell you, that one who has far more reason than you, I hope, ever will have to look on life with something worse than indifference, is yet no enemy to it; but can look backward on many bitter moments, partly with satisfac-

tion, and partly with patience; and forward too, on a scene not very promising, with some hope, and some expectations of a better day. The cause, however, which occasioned your reflection (though I can judge but very imperfectly of it) does not seem, at présent, to be weighty enough to make you take any such resolution as you meditate. Use it in its season, as a relief from what is tiresome to you, but not as if it was in consequence of any thing you take ill; on the contrary, if such a thing had happened at the time of your transmigration, I would defer it merely to avoid that appearance.

As to myself, I cannot boast, at present, either of my spirits, my situation, my employments, or fertility. The days and the nights pass, and I am never the nearer to any thing, but that one to which we are all tending; yet I love people that leave some traces of their journey behind them, and have strength enough to advise you to do so while you can. I expect to see Caractacus completed, and therefore I send you the books you wanted. I do not know whether they will furnish you with any new matter; but they are well enough written, and easily read. I told you before that (in a time of dearth) I would borrow from the Edda,

without entering too minutely on particulars: but, if I did so, I would make each image so clear, that it might be fully understood by itself; for in this obscure mythology we must not hint at things, as we do with the Greek fables, that every body is supposed to know at school. However, on second thoughts, I think it would be still better to graft any wild picturesque fable, absolutely of one's own invention, on the Druid-stock; I mean on those half dozen of old fancies that are known to be a part of their system. This will give you more freedom and latitude, and will leave no hold for the critics to fasten on.

I send you back the elegy* as you desired me to do. My advices are always at your service to take or refuse, therefore you should not call them severe. You know I do not love, much less pique myself on criticism; and think even a bad verse as good a thing or better than the best observation that ever was made upon it.—I like greatly the spirit and sentiment of it (much of which you perhaps owe to your present train of thinking); the disposition of the whole too is natural and elegiac; as to the expression,

* Elegy in the garden of a friend.

I would venture to say (did not you forbid me) that it is sometimes too easy. The last line I protest against (this, you will say, is worse than blotting out rhymes); the descriptive part is excellent.

Pray, when did I pretend to finish, or even insert passages into other people's works, as if it were equally easy to pick holes and to mend them? All I can say is, that your elegy must not end with the worst line in it.* It is flat; it is prose: whereas that, above all, ought to sparkle, or at least to shine. If the sentiment must stand, twirl it a little into an apothegm; stick a flower in it; gild it with a costly expression; let it strike the fancy, the ear, or the heart, and I am satisfied.

The other particular expressions which I object to, I mark on the manuscript. Now, I desire you would neither think me severe, nor at all regard what I say further than as it coincides with your own judgment, for the child deserves your partiality; it is a healthy well-made boy, with an ingenuous countenance, and promises to live long. I

* An attempt was accordingly made to improve it; how it stood when this criticism upon it was written, I cannot now recollect.

would only wash its face, dress it a little, make it walk upright and strong, and keep it from learning *pan* words.

I hope you couched my refusal* to lord John Cavendish in as respectful terms as possible, and with all due acknowledgment to the duke. If you hear who it is to be given to, pray let me know; for I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit.—Rowe was, I think, the last man of character that had it; Eusden was a person of great hopes in his youth, though at last he turned out a drunken parson; Dryden was as disgraceful to the office, from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses.

C.

TO DR. WHARTON.

February 21, 1768.

WOULD you know what I am doing? I doubt

* Of being poet laureate on the death of Cibber, which place the late duke of Devonshire (then lord chamberlain) desired his brother to offer to Mr. Gray: and his lordship had commissioned me (then in town) to write to him concerning it.

you have been told already, and hold my employments cheap enough; but every one must judge of his own *capability*, and *cut* his amusements according to his disposition. The drift of my present studies is to know, wherever I am, what lies within reach that may be worth seeing, whether it be building, ruin, park, garden, prospect, picture, or monument; to whom it does or has belonged, and what has been the characteristic and taste of different ages. You will say this is the object of all antiquaries; but pray what antiquary ever saw these objects in the same light, or desired to know them for a like reason? In short, say what you please, I am persuaded whenever my list* is finished you will approve it, and think it of no small use. My spirits are very near the freezing point; and for some hours of the day this exercise, by its warmth and gentle motion, serves to raise them a few degrees higher.

I hope the misfortune that has befallen Mrs. Cibber's canary bird will not be the ruin of Agis: it is probable you will have curiosity enough to see it, as it is by the author of Douglas.

* He wrote it, under its several divisions, on the blank pages of a pocket atlas.

CI.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 8, 1788.

IT is indeed for want of spirits, as you suspect, that my studies lie among the cathedrals, and the tombs, and the ruins. To think, though to little purpose, has been the chief amusement of my days; and when I would not, or cannot think, I dream. At present I feel myself able to write a catalogue, or to read the peerage book, or Miller's gardening dictionary, and am thankful that there are such employments and such authors in the world. Some people, who hold me cheap for this, are doing perhaps what is not half so well worth while. As to posterity, I may ask, (with somebody whom I have forgot) what has it ever done to oblige me?

To make a transition from myself to as poor a subject, the tragedy of Agis; I cry to think that it should be by the author of Douglas: why, it is all modern Greek; the story is an antique statue painted white and red, frizzed, and dressed in a negligée made by a Yorkshire mantua-maker. Then here is the miscellany (Mr. Dodsley has sent me

the whole set gilt and lettered, I thank him). Why, the two last volumes are worse than the four first; particularly Dr. Akenside is in a deplorable way.* What signifies learning and the ancients, (Mason will say triumphantly) why should people read Greek to lose their imagination, their ear, and their mother tongue? But then there is Mr. Shenstone, who trusts to nature and simple sentiment, why does he do no better? he goes hopping along his own gravel-walks, and never deviates from the beaten paths for fear of being lost.

I have read Dr. Swift, and am disappointed.† There is nothing of the negotiations that I have not seen better in M. de Torcy

* I have been told that this writer, unquestionably a man of great learning and genius, entertained, some years before his death, a notion that *Poetry was only true eloquence in metre*; and, according to this idea, wrote his ode to the country gentlemen of England, and afterwards made considerable alterations in that collection of odes which he had published in the earlier part of his life. We have seen in the letter LX., that Mr. Gray thought highly of his descriptive talents at that time. We are not therefore to impute what he here says to any prejudice in the critic, but to that change of taste in the poet, which (if the above anecdote be true) would unavoidably flatten his descriptions, and divest them of all picturesque imagery; nay, would sometimes convert his verse into mere prose; or, what is still worse, hard inflated prose.

† His history of the four last years of queen Anne.

before. The manner is careless, and has little to distinguish it from common writers. I meet with nothing to please me but the spiteful characters of the opposite party and its leaders. I expected much more secret history.

CII.

TO MR. STONHEWER.

Cambridge, August 18, 1758.

I AM as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism, when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long-debated question he inclined. That we are indeed mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn, with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such: that there is a power within that struggles against the force and bias of that mechanism, commands its motion, and, by frequent practice, reduces it to that ready obedience, which we call *habit*; and all this in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether right or wrong) to that least

material of all agents, a thought. 'I have known many in his case who, while they thought they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they were under the influence of one far more dangerous; one that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst actions, and opens to us a full licence for doing whatever we please; and yet these very people were not at all the more indulgent to other men (as they naturally should have been); their indignation to such as offended them, their desire of revenge on any body that hurt them was nothing mitigated: in short, the truth is, they wished to be persuaded of that opinion for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their heart; and they would have been glad (as they ought in common prudence) that nobody else should think the same, for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His French author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough without them. They put me in mind of the Greek sophist that got immortal honour by discoursing so feelingly on the miseries of our condition, that fifty of his audience went home and hanged themselves; yet he lived himself (I suppose) many years after in very good plight.

You say you cannot conceive how lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord; 2dly, he was as vain as any of his readers; 3dly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; 4thly, they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; 5thly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads no where; 6thly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks but with commoners: vanity is no longer interested in the matter, for the new road is become an old one. The mode of free-thinking is like that of ruffs and farthingales, and has given place to the mode of not thinking at all; once it was reckoned graceful, half to discover and half conceal the mind, but now we have been long accustomed to see it quite naked: primness and affectation of style, like the good breeding of queen Anne's court, has turned to hoydening and rude familiarity.

STRICTURES ON THE WRITINGS OF
LORD BOLINGBROKE.

"I will allow lord Bolingbroke, that the moral, as well as physical, attributes of God must be known to us only *à posteriori*, and that this is the only real knowledge we can have either of the one or the other; I will allow too, that perhaps it may be an idle distinction which we make between them: his moral attributes being as much in his nature and essence as those we call his physical; but the occasion of our making some distinction is plainly this: his eternity, infinity, omniscience, and almighty power, are not what connect him, if I may so speak, with us his creatures. We adore him, not because he always did, in every place, and always will, exist; but because he gave and still preserves to us our own existence by an exertion of his goodness. We adore him, not because he knows and can do all things, but because he made us capable of knowing and of doing what may conduct us to happiness: it is therefore his benevolence which we adore, not his greatness or power; and if we are made only to bear our part in a system, without any regard to our own par-

ticular happiness, we can no longer worship him as our all-bounteous parent: there is no meaning in the term. The idea of his malevolence (an impiety I tremble to write) must succeed. We have nothing left but our fears, and those too, vain; for whither can they lead but to despair and the sad desire of annihilation? "If then, justice and goodness be not the same in God as in our ideas, we mean nothing when we say that God is necessarily just and good; and for the same reason, it may as well be said that we know not what we mean when, according to Dr. Clarke, (Evid. 26th) we affirm that he is necessarily a wise and intelligent Being." What then can lord Bolingbroke mean, when he says every thing shows the wisdom of God; and yet adds, every thing does not show in like manner the goodness of God conformably to our ideas of this attribute in either?—By wisdom he must only mean, that God knows and employs the fittest means to a certain end, no matter what that end may be: this indeed is a proof of knowledge and intelligence; but these alone do not constitute wisdom; the word implies the application of these fittest means to the best and kindest end; or who will call it true wisdom? Even amongst ourselves, it is not

held as such. All the attributes, then, that he seems to think apparent in the constitution of things, are his unity, infinity, eternity, and intelligence; from no one of which, I boldly affirm, can result any duty of gratitude or adoration incumbent on mankind, more than if He and all things round him were produced, as some have dared to think, by the necessary working of eternal matter in an infinite vacuum: for what does it avail to add intelligence to those other physical attributes, unless that intelligence be directed, not only to the good of the whole, but also to the good of every individual of which that whole is composed.

It is therefore no impiety, but the direct contrary, to say that human justice, and the other virtues, which are indeed only various applications of human benevolence, bear some resemblance to the moral attributes of the supreme Being: it is only by means of that resemblance, we conceive them in him, or their effects in his works: it is by the same means only, that we comprehend those physical attributes which his lordship allows to be demonstrable: how can we form any notion of his unity, but from that unity of which we ourselves are conscious? How of his existence, but from our own conscious-

ness of existing? How of his power, but of that power which we experience in ourselves? yet neither lord Bolingbroke nor any other man, that thought on these subjects, ever believed that these our ideas were real and full representations of these attributes in the divinity. They say, He knows; they do not mean that he compares ideas which he acquired from sensation, and draws conclusions from them. They say, He acts; they do not mean by impulse, nor as the soul acts on an organized body. They say, He is omnipotent and eternal; yet on what are their ideas founded, but on our own narrow conceptions of space and duration, prolonged beyond the bounds of place and time? Either therefore there is a resemblance and analogy (however imperfect and distant) between the attributes of the divinity and our conceptions of them, or we cannot have any conceptions of them at all. He allows we ought to reason from earth, that we do know, to heaven, which we do not know: how can we do so, but by that affinity, which appears between one and the other?

In vain then does my lord attempt to ridicule the warm but melancholy imagination of Mr. Wollaston, in that fine soliloquy: "Must

I then bid my last farewell to these walks when I close these lids, and yonder blue regions, and all this scene darken upon me and go out? Must I then only serve to furnish dust to be mingled with the ashes of these herds and plants, or with this dirt under my feet? Have I been set so far above them in life; only to be levelled with them in death?"* No thinking head, no heart, that has the least sensibility, but must have made the same reflection; or at least must feel, not the beauty alone, but the truth of it, when he hears it from the mouth of another. Now what reply will lord Bolingbroke make to these questions which are put to him, not only by Wollaston, but by all mankind? He will tell you, that we, that is, the animals, vegetables, stones, and *other clods of earth*, are all connected in one immense design, that we are all dramatic personæ, in different characters, and that we were not made for ourselves, but for the action: that it is foolish, presumptuous, impious, and profane to murmur against the Almighty Author of this drama, when we feel ourselves unavoidably unhappy. On the contrary, we ought to rest our head on the soft pillow of resignation, on the

* Religion of Nature delineated, sect. ix. p. 209, quarto.

immovæable rock of tranquillity; secure, that if our pains and afflictions grow violent indeed, an immediate end will be put to our miserable being, and we shall be mingled with the dirt under our feet, a thing common to all the animal kind; and of which he who complains does not seem to have been set by his reason so far above them in life, as to deserve not to be mingled with them in death. Such is the consolation his philosophy gives us, and such the hope on which his tranquillity was founded.”*

CIII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Sunday, April 9, 1758.

I AM equally sensible of your affliction,† and of your kindness, that made you think of me. at such a moment; would to God I could lessen the one, or requite the other with

* The reader, who would choose to see the argument, as lord Bolingbroke puts it, will find it in the 4th volume of his philosophical works, sect. x. 41. His ridicule on Wollaston is in the 50th section of the same volume.

† Occasioned by the death of his eldest (and at the time his only) son.

that consolation which I have often received from you when I most wanted it ! but your grief is too just, and the cause of it too fresh, to admit of any such endeavour. What, indeed, is all human consolation ? Can it efface every little amiable word or action of an object we loved, from our memory ? Can it convince us, that all the hopes we had entertained, the plans of future satisfaction we had formed, were ill-grounded and vain, only because we have lost them ? The only comfort (I am afraid) that belongs to our condition, is to reflect (when time has given us leisure for reflection) that others have suffered worse ; or that we ourselves might have suffered the same misfortune, at times and in circumstances that would probably have aggravated our sorrow. You might have seen this poor child arrived at an age to fulfil all your hopes, to attach you more strongly to him by long habit, by esteem, as well as natural affection, and that towards the decline of your life, when we most stand in need of support, and when he might chance to have been your *only* support ; and then by some unforeseen and deplorable accident, or some painful lingering distemper, you might have lost him. Such has been the fate of many an unhappy father ! I know

there is a sort of tenderness which infancy and innocence alone produce; but I think you must own the other to be a stronger and a more overwhelming sorrow. Let me then beseech you to try, by every method of avocation and amusement, whether you cannot, by degrees, get the better of that dejection of spirits, which inclines you to see every thing in the worst light possible, and throws a sort of voluntary gloom, not only over your present, but future days; as if even your situation now were not preferable to that of thousands round you; and as if your prospect hereafter might not open as much of happiness to you as to any person you know: the condition of our life perpetually instructs us to be rather slow to hope, as well as to despair; and (I know you will forgive me, if I tell you) you are often a little too hasty in both, perhaps from constitution: it is sure we have great power over our own minds, when we choose to exert it; and though it be difficult to resist the mechanic impulse and bias of our own temper, it is yet possible, and still more so to delay those resolutions it inclines us to take, which we almost always have cause to repent.

You tell me nothing of Mrs. Wharton's or your own state of health; I will not talk to

you more upon this subject till I hear you are both well; for that is the grand point, and without it we may as well not think at all. You flatter me in thinking that any thing I can do* could at all alleviate the just concern your loss has given you; but I cannot flatter myself so far, and know how little qualified I am at present to give any satisfaction to myself on this head, and in this way, much less to you. I by no means pretend to inspiration; but yet I affirm, that the faculty in question is by no means voluntary; it is the result (I suppose) of a certain disposition of mind, which does not depend on one's self, and which I have not felt this long time. You that are a witness how seldom this spirit has moved me in my life, may easily give credit to what I say.

CIV.

TO MR. PALGRAVE.†

Stoke, Sept. 6, 1788.

I do not know how to make you amends,

* His friend had requested him to write an epitaph on the child.

† Rector of Palgrave and Thrandeston in Suffolk. He was making a tour in Scotland when this letter was written to him.

having neither rock, ruin, nor precipice near me to send you: they do not grow in the south: but only say the word, if you would have a compact neat box of red brick with sash windows, or a grotto made of flints and shell-work, or a walnut-tree with three mole-hills under it, stuck with honey-suckles round a basin of gold-fishes, and you shall be satisfied; they shall come by the Edinburgh coach.

In the mean time I congratulate you on your new acquaintance with the *savage*, the *rude*, and the *tremendous*. Pray, tell me, is it any thing like what you had read in your book, or seen in two-shilling prints? Do not you think a man may be the wiser (I had almost said the better) for going a hundred or two of miles; and that the mind has more room in it than most people seem to think, if you will but furnish the apartments? I almost envy your last month, being in a very insipid situation myself; and desire you would not fail to send me some furniture for my Gothic apartment, which is very cold at present. It will be the easier task, as you have nothing to do but transcribe your little red books, if they are not rubbed out; for I conclude you have not trusted every thing to memory, which is ten times worse than a

lead-pencil; half a word fixed upon or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection. When we trust to the picture that objects draw of themselves on our mind, we deceive ourselves; without accurate and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first, the outlines are soon blurred, the colours every day grow fainter; and at last, when we could produce it to any body, we are forced to supply its defects with a few strokes of our own imagination.* God forgive me, I suppose I have done so myself before now, and misled many a good body that put their trust in me. Pray, tell me, (but with permission, and without any breach of hospitality) is it so much warmer on the other side of the Swale (as some people of honour say) than it is here? Has the singing of birds, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of herds, deafened you at Rainton? Did the vast old oaks and thick groves in Northumberland keep off the sun too much from you? I am too civil to extend my inquiries beyond Berwick. Every thing, doubtless, must improve upon you as you advanced northward. You

* Had this letter nothing else to recommend it, the advice here given to the curious traveller of making all his memoranda *on the spot*, and the reasons for it, are so well expressed, and withal so important, that they certainly deserve our notice.

must tell me, though, about Melross, Roslin Chapel, and Arbroath. In short, your portefeuille must be so full, that I only desire a loose chapter or two, and will wait for the rest till it comes out.

CV.

TO MR. MASON.

Stoke, Nov. 9, 1758.

I SHOULD have told you that Caradoc came safe to hand;* but my critical faculties have been so taken up in dividing *nothing* with an old woman,† that they are not yet composed enough for a better and more tranquil employment: shortly, however, I will make them obey me. But am I to send this copy to Mr. Hurd, or return it to you? Methinks I do not love this travelling to and again of manuscripts by the post. While I am writing, your second packet is just arrived. I can only tell you in gross, that there seem to me certain passages altered which might

* A second manuscript of Caractacus with the odes inserted.

† Mrs. Rogers, his aunt, died about this time, and left Mr. Gray and Mrs. Oliffe, another of his aunts, her joint executors.

as well have been let alone; and that I shall not be easily reconciled to Mador's own song.* I must not have my fancy raised to that agreeable pitch of heathenism and wild magical enthusiasm, and then have you let me drop into moral philosophy and cold good sense. I remember you insulted me when I saw you last, and affected to call that which delighted my imagination, *nonsense*: now I insist that sense is nothing in poetry, but according to the dress she wears, and the scene she appears in. If you should lead me into a superb Gothic building with a thousand clustered pillars, each of them half a mile high, the walls all covered with fretwork, and the windows full of red and blue saints, that had neither head nor tail; and I should find the Venus of Medici in person perked up in a long niche over the high altar, do you think it would raise or damp my devotions? I say that Mador must be entirely a Briton; and that his pre-eminence among his companions must be shown by superior wildness, more barbaric fancy, and a more striking and deeper harmony both of words and numbers: if British antiquity be

* He means here the second ode, which was afterwards altered.

too narrow, this is the place for invention; and if it be pure invention, so much the clearer must the expression be, and so much the stronger and richer the imagery. There's for you now!

CVI.

TO MR. PALGRAVE.

London, July 24, 1759.

I AM now settled in my new territories, commanding Bedford gardens, and all the fields as far as Highgate and Hampstead, with such a concourse of moving pictures as would astonish you; so *rus-in-urbe-ish*, that I believe I shall stay here, except little excursions and vagaries, for a year to come. What though I am separated from the fashionable world by broad St. Giles's, and many a dirty court and alley, yet here is air, and sunshine, and quiet. However, to comfort you: I shall confess that I am basking with heat all the summer, and I suppose shall be blown down all the winter, besides being robbed every night; I trust, however, that the Museum, with all its manuscripts and rarities by the cart-load, will make am-

ple amends for all the aforesaid inconveniences.

I this day passed through the jaws of a great leviathan into the den of Dr. Templeman, superintendant of the reading-room, who congratulated himself on the sight of so much good company. We were, first, a man that writes for Lord Royston; 2dly, a man that writes for Dr. Burton, of York; 3dly, a man that writes for the emperor of Germany, or Dr. Pocock, for he speaks the worst English I ever heard; 4thly, Dr. Stukely, who writes for himself, the very worst person he could write for; and, lastly, I, who only read to know if there be any thing worth writing, and that not without some difficulty. I find that they printed 1000 copies of the Harleian catalogue, and have sold only four-score; that they have 900*l.* a year income, and spend 1300*l.* and are building apartments for the under-keepers; so I expect in winter to see the collection advertised and set to auction.

Have you read lord Clarendon's continuation of his history? Do you remember Mr. * * *'s account of it before it came out? How well he recollected all the faults, and how utterly he forgot all the beauties! Surely the grossest taste is better than such a sort of delicacy.

CVII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

London, June 22, 1760.

I AM not sorry to hear you are exceeding busy, except as it has deprived me of the pleasure I should have in hearing often from you; and as it has been occasioned by a little vexation and disappointment. To find one's self business, I am persuaded, is the great art of life; I am never so angry, as when I hear my acquaintance wishing they had been bred to some poking profession, or employed in some office of drudgery, as if it were pleasanter to be at the command of other people than at one's own; and as if they could not go unless they were wound up: yet I know and feel what they mean by this complaint; it proves that some spirit, something of genius (more than common) is required to teach a man how to employ himself: I say a man; for women, commonly speaking, never feel this distemper; they have always something to do; time hangs not on their hands (unless they be fine ladies); a variety of small inventions and occupations fill up the void, and their eyes are never open in vain.

As to myself, I have again found rest for the sole of my gouty foot in your old dining-room.* and hope that you will find at least an equal satisfaction at Old-Park; if your bog prove as comfortable as my oven, I shall see no occasion to pity you, and only wish you may brew no worse than I bake.

You totally mistake my talents, when you impute to me any magical skill in planting roses: I know I am no conjurer in these things; when they are done I can find fault, and that is all. Now this is the very reverse of genius, and I feel my own littleness. Reasonable people know themselves better than is commonly imagined; and therefore (though I never saw any instance of it,) I believe Mason when he tells me that he understands these things. The prophetic eye of taste (as Mr. Pitt calls it) sees all the beauties that a place is susceptible of, long before they are born; and when it plants a seedling, already sits under the shadow of it, and enjoys the effect it will have from every point of view that lies in prospect. You must therefore invoke Ca-

* The house in Southampton-Row, where Mr. Gray lodged, had been tenanted by Dr. Wharton; who, on account of his ill health, left London the year before, and was removed to his paternal estate at Old-Park, near Durham.

ractacus, and he will send his spirits from the top of Snowdon to Cross-fell or Warden-law.

I am much obliged to you for your antique news. Froissard is a favourite book of mine (though I have not attentively read him, but only dipped here and there); and it is strange to me that people, who would give thousands for a dozen portraits (originals of that time) to furnish a gallery, should never cast an eye on so many moving pictures of the life, actions, manners, and thoughts of their ancestors, done on the spot, and in strong, though simple colours. In the succeeding century Froissard, I find, was read with great satisfaction by every body that could read; and on the same footing with king Arthur, sir Tristram, and archbishop Turpin: not because they thought him a fabulous writer, but because they took them all for true and authentic historians; to so little purpose was it in that age for a man to be at the pains of writing truth. Pray, are you come to the four Irish kings that went to school to king Richard the Second's master of the ceremonies, and the man who informed Froissard of all he had seen in St. Patrick's purgatory?

The town are reading the king of Prussia's poetry (*Le Philosophe sans Souci*), and I have done like the town; they do not seem so sick of it as I am: It is all the scum of Voltaire and lord Bolingbroke, the Crambe recotta of our worst freethinkers, tossed up in German-French rhyme. Tristram Shandy is still a greater object of admiration, the man as well as the book; one is invited to dinner, where he dines, a fortnight before: as to the volumes yet published, there is much good fun in them, and humour sometimes hit and sometimes missed. Have you read his sermons, with his own comic figure, from a painting by Reynolds at the head of them? They are in the style I think most proper for the pulpit,* and show a strong

* Our author was of opinion that it was the business of the preacher rather to persuade by the power of eloquence to the practice of known duties, than to reason with the art of logic on points of controverted doctrine: Hence, therefore, he thought that sometimes imagination might not be out of its place in a sermon. But let him speak for himself in an extract from one of his letters to me in the following year: "Your quotation from Jeremy Taylor is a fine one. I have long thought of reading him; for I am persuaded that chopping logic in the pulpit, as our divines have done ever since the revolution, is not the thing; but that imagination and warmth of expression, are in their place there, as much as on the stage; moderated, however, and chastised a little by the purity and severity of religion."

imagination and a sensible heart ; but you see him often tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of the audience.

CVIII.

TO MR. STONHEWER.

London, June 29, 1760.

THOUGH you have had but a melancholy employment, it is worthy of envy, and I hope will have all the success it deserves.* It was the best and most natural method of cure, and such as could not have been administered by any but your gentle hand. I thank you for communicating to me what must give you so much satisfaction.

I too was reading M. D'Alembert,† and (like you) am totally disappointed in his elements. I could only taste a little of the first course : it was dry as a stick, hard as a stone, and cold as a cucumber. But then

* Mr. Stonhewer was now at Houghton-le-Spring, in the bishoprick of Durham, attending on his sick father, rector of that parish.

† Two subsequent volumes of his "*Mélanges de Littérature et Philosophie*."

the letter to Rousseau is like himself; and the discourses on elocution, and on the liberty of music, are divine. He has added to his translations from Tacitus; and (what is remarkable) though that author's manner more nearly resembles the best French writers of the present age, than any thing, he totally fails in the attempt. Is it his fault, or that of the language?

I have received another Scotch packet,* with a third specimen, inferior in kind, (be-

* Of the fragments of Erse poetry, many of which Mr. Gray saw in manuscript before they were published. In a letter to Dr. Wharton, written in the following month, he thus expresses himself on the same subject: If you have seen Mr. Stenhewer, he has probably told you of my old Scotch (or rather Irish) poetry: I am gone mad about them; they are said to be translations (literal and in prose) from the Erse tongue, done by one Macpherson, a young clergyman in the Highlands. He means to publish a collection he has of these specimens of antiquity. if it be antiquity; but what perplexes me is, I cannot come at any certainty on that head. I was so struck with their beauty, that I writ into Scotland to make a thousand inquiries; the letters I have in return, are ill wrote, ill reasoned, unsatisfactory, calculated (one would imagine) to deceive, and yet not cunning enough to do it cleverly. In short the whole external evidence would make one believe these fragments counterfeit: but the internal is so strong on the other side, that I am resolved to believe them genuine, spite of the devil and the kirk: it is impossible to conceive that they were written by the same man that writes me these letters; on the other hand, it is almost as hard to suppose (if they are original) that he should be able to translate them so admirably. In short, this man is the very

cause it is merely description) but yet full of nature and noble wild imagination. Five bards pass the night at the castle of a chief (himself a principal bard); each goes out in his turn to observe the face of things, and returns with an extempore picture of the changes he has seen (it is an October night, the harvest-month of the Highlands). This is the whole plan; yet there is a contrivance, and a preparation of ideas, that you would not expect. The oddest thing is, that every one of them sees ghosts (more or less). The idea, that struck and surprised me most, is the following. One of them (describing a storm of wind and rain) says,

Ghosts ride on the tempest to-night :
Sweet is their voice between the gusts of wind :
Their songs are of other worlds !

Did you never observe (*while rocking winds are piping loud*) that pause, as the gust is recollecting itself, and rising upon the ear in a shrill and plaintive note, like the swell of an Æolian harp ? I do assure you there

dæmon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages. The Welsh poets are also coming to light ; I have seen a discourse in manuscript about them, by one Mr Evans, a clergyman, with specimens of thir writing : this is in Latin, and though it does not approach the other, there are fine scraps among it."

is nothing in the world so like the voice of a spirit. Thomson had an ear sometimes : he was not deaf to this ; and has described it gloriously, but given it another different turn, and of more horror. I cannot repeat the lines : it is in his *Winter*. There is another very fine picture in one of them. It describes the breaking of the clouds after the storm, before it is settled into a calm, and when the moon is seen by short intervals.

The waves are tumbling on the lake,
And lash the rocky sides.
The boat is brim-full in the cove,
The oars on the rocking tide.
Sad sits a maid beneath a cliff,
And eyes the rolling stream :
Her lover promised to come,
She saw his boat [when it was evening] on the lake ;
Are these his groans in the gale ?
Is this his broken boat on the shore ?

CIX.

TO DR. CLARKE.*

Pembroke Hall, August 12, 1760.

Not knowing whether you are yet returned

* Physician at Epsom. With this gentleman Mr. Gray commenced an early acquaintance at college.

from your sea-water, I write at random to you. For me, I am come to my resting-place, and find it very necessary, after living for a month in a house with three women that laughed from morning to night, and would allow nothing to the sulkiness of my disposition. Company and cards at home, parties by land and water abroad, and (what they call) *doing something*, that is, racketting about from morning to night, are occupations, I find, that wear out my spirits, especially in a situation where one might sit still, and be alone with pleasure; for the place was a hill* like Cliefden, opening to a very extensive and diversified landscape, with the Thames, which is navigable, running at its foot.

I would wish to continue here (in a very different scene, it must be confessed) till Michaelmas; but I fear I must come to town much sooner. Cambridge is a delight of a place, now there is no body in it. I do believe you would like it, if you knew what it was without inhabitants. It is they, I assure you, that get it an ill name and spoil all. Our friend Dr. * * * (one of its nuisances) is not expected here again in a

* Near Henley.

hurry. He is gone to his grave with five fine mackarel (large and full of roe) in his belly. He eat them all at one dinner; but his fate was a turbot on Trinity Sunday, of which he left little for the company besides bones. He had not been hearty all the week; but after this sixth fish he never held up his head more, and a violent looseness carried him off.—They say he made a very good end.

Have you seen the Erse fragments since they were printed? I am more puzzled than ever about their antiquity, though I still incline (against every body's opinion) to believe them old. Those you have already seen are the best; though there are some others that are excellent too.

CX.

TO MR. MASON.

Cambridge, August 20, 1760.

I HAVE sent Musæus* back as you desired me, seratched here and there. And with

* I had desired Mr. Gray to revise my Monody on Mr. Pope's death.

it also a bloody Satire,* written against no less persons than *you and I* by name. I concluded at first it was Mr.***, because he is your friend and my humble servant; but then I thought he knew the world too well to call us the favourite minions of Taste and of Fashion, especially as to odes; for to them his ridicule is confined: so it is not he, but Mr. Colman, nephew to lady Bath, author of the *Connoisseur*, a member of one of the inns of court, and a particular acquaintance of Mr. Garrick. What have you done to him? for I never heard his name before; he makes very tolerable fun with me where I understand him (which is not every where); but seems more angry with you. Lest people should not understand the humour of the thing (which indeed to do they must have our lyricisms at their finger ends) letters come out in Lloyd's Evening-Post to tell them who and what it was that he meant, and say it is like to produce a great combustion in the literary world. So if you have any mind to *combustle* about it, well and good; for me, I am

* The Parodies in question, entitled *Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion*, were written by Lloyd and Colman.

neither so literary nor so combustible.* The Monthly Review, I see, just now has much stuff about us on this occasion. It says one of us at least has always borne his faculties meekly. I leave you to guess which of us that is; I think I know. You simpleton you! you must be meek, must you? and see what you get by it.

I do not like your improvements at Aston, it looks so like settling; if I come I will set fire to it. I will never believe the B * * s and the C * * s are dead, though I smelt them; that sort of people always live to a good old age. I dare swear they are only gone to Ireland, and we shall soon hear they are bishops.

The Erse fragments have been published five weeks ago in Scotland, though I had them not (by a mistake) till the other day. As you tell me new things do not reach you soon at Aston, I enclose what I can; the rest shall follow, when you tell me whether

* Had Mr. Pope disregarded the sarcasms of the many writers that endeavoured to eclipse his poetical fame, as much as Mr. Gray here appears to have done, the world would not have been possessed of a Dunciad; but it would have been impressed with a more amiable idea of its author's temper. It is for the sake of showing how Mr. Gray felt on such occasions, that I publish this letter.

you have not got the pamphlet already. I send the two to Mr. Wood which I had before, because he has not *the affectation of not admiring*.* I have another from Mr. Macpherson, which he has not printed; it is mere description, but excellent too in its kind. If you are good and will learn to admire, I will transcribe and send it.

As to their authenticity, I have made many inquiries, and have lately procured a letter from Mr. David Hume, (the historian) which is more satisfactory than any thing I have yet met with on that subject. He says,

“Certain it is that these poems are in every body’s mouth in the Highlands, have been handed down from father to son, and are of an age beyond all memory and tradition. Adam Smith, the celebrated professor in Glasgow, told me, that the piper of the Argyleshire militia repeated to him all those which Mr. Macpherson had translated, and many more of equal beauty. Major Mackay (lord Rae’s brother) told me that he remembers them perfectly well; as likewise did the laird of Macfarlane, (the greatest anti-

* It was rather a want of credulity than admiration that Mr. Gray should have laid to my charge. I suspected that, whether the fragments were genuine or not, they were by no means literally translated.

quarian we have in this country) and who insists strongly on the historical truth, as well as the poetical beauty of these productions. I could add the laird and lady Macleod, with many more, that live in different parts of the Highlands, very remote from each other, and could only be acquainted with what had become (in a manner) national works. There is a country-surgeon in Lochaber, who has by heart the entire epic poem mentioned by Mr. Macpherson in his preface; and, as he is old, is perhaps the only person living that knows it all, and has never committed it to writing, we are in the more haste to recover a monument, which will certainly be regarded as a curiosity in the republic of letters: we have therefore set about a subscription of a guinea or two guineas apiece, in order to enable Mr. Macpherson to undertake a mission into the Highlands to recover this poem, and other fragments of antiquity." He adds too, that the names of Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, &c. are still given in the Highlands to large mastiffs, as we give to ours the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Hector, &c.

CXI.

TO DR. WHARTON.

London, 1751.

I REJOICE to find that you not only grow reconciled to your northern scene, but discover beauties round you that once were deformities: I am persuaded the whole matter is to have always something going forward. Happy they that can create a rose-tree, or erect a honey-suckle; that can watch the brood of a hen, or see a fleet of their own ducklings launch into the water: It is with a sentiment of envy I speak it, who never shall have even a thatched roof of my own, nor gather a strawberry but in Covent-Garden. I will not, however, believe in the *vocality* of Old-Park till next summer, when perhaps I may trust to my own ears.

The Nouvelle Heloise cruelly disappointed me, but it has its partisans, amongst which are Mason and Mr. Hurd; for me, I admire nothing but Fingal* (I conclude you have

* In a letter to another friend, informing him that he had sent Fingal down to him, he says, "For my part, I will stick to my credulity, and if I am cheated, think it is worse for him [the translator] than for me. The epic poem is foolishly so called, yet there

seen it, if not, Stenhewer can lend it you); yet I remain still in doubt about the authenticity of these poems, though inclining rather to believe them genuine in spite of the world; whether they are the inventions of antiquity, or of a modern Scotchman, either case is to me, alike unaccountable; *je m'y perds*.

I send you a Swedish and English calendar;* the first column is by Berger, a disciple of Linnæus; the second by Mr. Stillingfleet; the third (very imperfect indeed) by me. You are to observe, as you tend your plantations and take your walks, how the spring advances in the north, and whether Old-Park most resembles Upsal or Stratton. The latter has on one side a barren black heath, on the other a light sandy loam, all the country about it is a dead flat; you see it is necessary you should know the situation (I do not mean any reflection upon any body's place); and this is the description

is a sort of plan and unity in it very strange for a barbarous age; yet what I more admire are some of the detached pieces—the rest I leave to the discussion of antiquarians and historians; yet my curiosity is much interested in their decision.” No man surely ever took more pains with himself to believe any thing than Mr. Gray seems to have done on this occasion.

* See Stillingfleet's Tracts, p. 261.

Mr. Stillingfleet gives of his friend Mr. Marsham's seat, to which he retires in the summer, and botanizes. I have lately made an acquaintance with this philosopher, who lives in a garret here in the winter, that he may support some near relations who depend upon him; he is always employed, consequently (according to my old maxim) always happy, always cheerful, and seems to me a very worthy honest man; his present scheme is to send some persons properly qualified to reside a year or two in Attica, to make themselves acquainted with the climate, productions, and natural history of the country, that we may understand Aristotle, Theophrastus, &c. who have been heathen Greek to us for so many ages; and this he has got proposed to lord Bute, no unlikely person to put it into execution, as he is himself a botanist.

CXII.

TO MR. MASON.

London, Jan. 22, 1761.

I CANNOT pity you; *au contraire*, I wish I had been at Aston, when I was foolish

enough to go through the six volumes of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. All I can say for myself is, that I was confined for three weeks at home by a severe cold, and had nothing better to do: There is no one event in it that might not happen any day of the week (separately taken) in any private family; yet these events are so put together, that the series of them is more absurd and more improbable than *Amadis de Gaul*. The *dramatis personæ* (as the author says) are all of them good characters; I am sorry to hear it: for had they been all hanged at the end of the third volume, no body (I believe) would have cared. In short, I went on and on, in hopes of finding some wonderful *dénouement* that would set all right, and bring something like nature and interest out of absurdity and insipidity: no such thing, it grows worse and worse; and (if it be Rousseau's, which is not doubted) is the strongest instance I ever saw, that a very extraordinary man may entirely mistake his own talents. By the motto and preface, it appears to be his own story, or something similar to it.*

* If it be considered that Mr. Gray always preferred expression and sentiment to the arrangement of a story, it may seem somewhat extraordinary that the many striking beauties of these kinds, with which this singular work abounds, were not excepted from so

The opera-house is crowded this year like any ordinary theatre. Elisi is finer than any thing that has been here in your memory: yet, as I suspect, has been finer than he is: he appears to be near forty, a little pot-bellied and thick shouldered, otherwise no bad figure; his action proper, and not ungraceful. We have heard nothing, since I remember operas, but eternal passages, divisions, and flights of execution: of these he has absolutely none; whether merely from judgment, or a little from age, I will not affirm; his point is expression, and to that all the graces and ornaments he inserts (which are few and short) are evidently directed: he goes higher (they say) than Farinelli; but then this celestial note you do not hear above once in a whole opera; and he falls from this altitude at once to the mellowest, softest, strongest tones (about the middle of his compass) that can be heard. The Mattei, I assure you, is much improved by his example, and by her great success this winter; but then the burlettas, and the Paganina, I have not been so pleased with

general a censure; for my own part [to use a phrase of his own] "they strike me blind" to all the defects which he has here enumerated.

any thing these many years: she too is fat, and above forty, yet handsome withal, and has a face that speaks the language of all nations: she has not the invention, the fire, and the variety of action that the Spiletta had; yet she is light, agile, ever in motion, and above all graceful; but then her voice, her ear, her taste in singing: Good God—— as Mr. Richardson the painter says. Pray ask lord * * ; for I think I have seen him there once or twice, as much pleased as I was.

CXIII.

TO MR. MASON.

August 1761.

BE assured your York canon never will die; so the better the thing is in value, the worse for you.* The true way to immortality is to get you nominated one's successor: age and diseases vanish at your name; fevers turn to radical heat, and fistulas to issues: it is a

* This was written at a time, when, by the favour of Dr. Fountainne, dean of York, I expected to be made a residentiary in his cathedral.

judgment that waits on your insatiable avarice. You could not let the poor old man die at his ease, when he was about it; and all his family (I suppose) are cursing you for it.

I wrote to lord * * * * on his recovery; and he answers me very cheerfully, as if his illness had been but slight, and the pleurisy were no more than a hole in one's stocking. He got it (he says) not by scampering, racketting, and riding post, as I had supposed; but by going with ladies to Vauxhall. He is the picture (and pray so tell him, if you see him) of an old alderman that I knew, who, after living forty years on the fat of the land, (not milk and honey, but arrack punch and venison) and losing his great toe with a mortification, said to the last, that he owed it to two grapes, which he eat one day after dinner. He felt them lie cold at his stomach the minute they were down.

Mr. Montagu (as I guess, at your instigation) has earnestly desired me to write some lines to be put on a monument, which he means to erect at Bellisle.* It is a task I do not love, knowing sir William Williams so slightly as I did: but he is so friendly a

* See Poems.

person, and his affliction seemed to me so real, that I could not refuse him. I have sent him the following verses, which I neither like myself, nor will he, I doubt: however, I have showed him that I wished to oblige him. Tell me your real opinion.

CXIV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Sunday, February 23, 1762.

I RETURN you my best thanks for the copy of your book,* which you sent me, and have not at all lessened my opinion of it since I read it in print, though the press has in general a bad effect on the complexion of one's works. The engravings look, as you say, better than I had expected, yet not altogether so well as I could wish. I rejoice in the good dispositions of our court, and in the propriety of their application to you: the work is a thing so much to be wished; has so near a connection with the turn of your studies and of your curiosity; and might find such ample materials among your boards and in your head; that it will be a sin if you let

* The Anecdotes of Painting. B.

it drop and come to nothing, or worse than nothing, for want of your assistance. The historical part should be in the manner of Henault, a mere abridgement, a series of facts selected with judgment, that may serve as a clew to lead the mind along in the midst of those ruins and scattered monuments of art, that time has spared. This would be sufficient, and better than Montfaucon's more diffuse narrative. Such a work (I have heard) Mr. Burke is now employed about, which though not intended for this purpose, might be applied perhaps to this use. Then at the end of each reign should come a dissertation explanatory of the plates, and pointing out the turn of thought, the customs, ceremonies, arms, dresses, luxury, and private life, with the improvement or decline of the arts during that period. This you must do yourself, beside taking upon you the superintendence, direction, and choice of materials. As to the expense, that must be the king's own entirely, and he must give the book to foreign ministers and people of note; for it is obvious no private man can undertake such a thing without a subscription, and no gentleman will care for such an expedient; and a gentleman it should be, because he must have easy access to archives, cabi-

nets, and collections of all sorts. I protest I do not think it impossible but they may give into such a scheme: they approve the design, they wish to encourage the arts and to be magnificent, and they have no Versailles or Herculaneum.

I hope to see you toward the end of March. If you bestow a line on me, pray tell me whether the baronne de la Peyriere is gone to her castle of Viry; and whether Fingal be discovered or shrewdly suspected to be a forgery. Adieu!

CXV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 4, 1762.

I FEEL very ungrateful every day that I continue silent; and yet now that I take my pen in hand I have only time to tell you, that of all the places which I saw in my return from you, Hardwicke pleased me the most.* One would think that Mary, queen of Scots, was but just walked down into the park with her guard for half an hour; her

* A seat of the Duke of Devonshire, in Derbyshire.

gallery, her room of audience, her anti-chamber, with the very canopies, chair of state, footstool, *lit de repos*, oratory, carpets, and hangings, just as she left them: a little tattered indeed, but the more venerable; and all preserved with religious care, and papered up in winter.

When I arrived in London, I found professor Turner* had been dead above a fortnight; and being cockered and spirited up by some friends (though it was rather the latest) I got my name suggested to lord Bute. You may easily imagine who undertook it, and indeed he did it with zeal.† I received my answer very soon, which was what you may easily imagine, but joined with great professions of his desire to serve me on future occasions, and many more fine words that I pass over, not out of modesty, but for another reason: so you see I have made my fortune like sir Francis Wronghead. This nothing is a profound secret, and no one here suspects it even now. To-day I hear

* Professor of modern languages in the university of Cambridge.

† This person was the late sir Henry Erskine. As this was the only application Mr. Gray ever made to ministry, I thought it necessary to insert his own account of it. The place in question was given to the tutor of sir James Lowther.

Mr. E. Delaval* has got it, but we are not yet certain; next to myself, I wished for him.

You see we have made a peace: I shall be silent about it, because if I say any thing anti-ministerial, you will tell me you know the reason; and if I approve it, you will think I have my expectations still. All I know is, that the duke of Newcastle and lord Hardwick both say it is an excellent peace, and only Mr. Pitt calls it inglorious and insidious.

CXVI.

TO MR. MASON.

February 8, 1763.

DOCTISSIME domine, anne tibi arrident *complimenta*?† If so, I hope your vanity is

* Fellow of Pembroke-Hall, and of the Royal Society.

† William Taylor Howe, esq. of Standon Place, near Chipping-Ongar, in Essex, an honorary fellow of Pembroke-Hall, was now on his travels in Italy, where he had made an acquaintance with the celebrated count Algarotti, and had recommended to him Mr. Gray's poems and my dramas. After the perusal he received a letter from the count, written in that style of superlative panegyric, peculiar to Italians. A copy of this letter Mr. Howe had just now

tickled with the *verghe d'oro* of count Algarotti, and the intended translation of Sigr. Agostino Paradisi: for my part, I am ravished (for I too have my share). Are you upon the road to see all these wonders, and snuff up the incense of Pisa; or has Mr. Brown abated your ardour by sending you the originals? I am waiting with impatience for your coming.

I am obliged to you for your drawing and very *learned* dissertation annexed.* You

sent to our common friend Mr. Brown, then president of the college; and also another of the count's, addressed to Sigr. Paradisi, a Tuscan poet; in which, after explaining the arguments of my two dramatic poems, he advises him to translate them; but principally *Caractacus*.—This anecdote not only explains the above paragraph, but the subsequent letter. The Latin, at the beginning of the letter, alludes to a similar expression which a fellow of a college had made use of to a foreigner who dined in the college hall. Having occasion to ask him if he would eat any cabbage to his boiled beef, he said “*anne tibi arident herbæ?*”

* This relates to the ruin of a small Gothic chapel near the north-west end of the cathedral at York, not noticed by Drake in his *Eboracum*. When Mr. Gray made me a visit at that place the summer before, he was much struck with the beautiful proportion of the windows in it, which induced me to get Mr. Paul Sandby to make a drawing of it; and also to endeavour, in a letter to Mr. Gray, to explain to what foundation it belonged. As his answer contains some excellent general remarks on Gothic building, I thought proper to publish it, though the particular matter which occasioned them was not of any great consequence.

have made out your point with a great degree of probability, (for though the *nimis adhasit* might startle one, yet the sale of the tithes and chapel to Webster seems to set all right again) and I do believe the building in question was the chapel of St. Sepulchre. But then, that the ruin now standing was the individual chapel, as erected by archbishop Roger, I can by no means think. I found myself merely on the style and taste of architecture. The vaults under the choir are still in being, and were undoubtedly built by this very archbishop: they are truly Saxon; only that the arches are pointed, though very obtusely. It is the south transept (not the north) that is the oldest part of the minster now above ground: it is said to have been begun by Geffery Plantagenet, who died about thirty years after Roger, and left it unfinished. His successor, Walter Grey, completed it; so we do not exactly know to which of these two prelates we are to ascribe any certain part of it. Grey lived a long time, and was archbishop from 1216 to 1255 (39 Henry III.); and in this reign it was, that the beauty of the Gothic architecture began to appear. The chapter-house is in all probability his work, and (I should suppose) built in his latter days;

whereas, what he did of the south transept might be performed soon after his accession. It is in the second order of this building, that the round arches appear, including a row of pointed ones, (which you mention, and which I also observed) similar to those in St. Sepulchre's chapel, though far inferior in the proportions and neatness of workmanship. The same thing is repeated in the north transept; but this is only an imitation of the other; done for the sake of regularity; for this part of the building is no older than archbishop Romaine, who came to the see in 1285, and died 1295.

All the buildings of Henry the Second's time (under whom Roger lived and died, 1185) are of a clumsy and heavy proportion, with a few rude and awkward ornaments: and this style continues to the beginning of Henry the Third's reign, though with a little improvement, as in the nave of Fountain's abbey, &c. then all at once come in the tall picked arches, the light clustered columns, the capitals of curling foliage, the fretted tabernacles and vaultings, and a profusion of statues, &c. that constitute the good Gothic style; together with decreasing and flying buttresses, and pinnacles, on the outside. Nor must you conclude any thing from Ro-

ger's own tomb, which has (I remember) a wide surbased arch with scalloped ornaments, &c. for this can be no older than the nave itself, which was built by archbishop Melton, after the year 1315, one hundred and thirty years after Roger's death.

I have compared Helvetius and Elfrida, as you desired me,* and find thirteen parallel

* As the plagiarism, to which Mr. Gray here alludes, is but little known, and, I think, for its singularity, is somewhat curious, I shall beg the reader's patience while I dilate upon it; though I am aware it will stretch this note to an unconscionable length. M. Helvetius, in the third chapter of his third essay de l'Esprit, which treats of the extent of memory, means to prove that this faculty, in the extreme, is not necessary to constitute a great genius. For this purpose he examines whether the greatness of the very different talents of Locke and of Milton ought to be considered as the effect of their possessing this talent in an extraordinary degree. He then proceeds as follows: "As the last example of the small extent of memory necessary to a fine imagination, I shall give in a note the translation of a piece of English poetry; which, with the preceding, will, I believe, prove to those who would decompose the works of illustrious men, that a great genius does not necessarily suppose a great memory." I now set down that note with references to Elfrida underneath it, and I choose to give it in the English translation printed in 1759, that the parallel passages may be the more obvious at first sight. "A young virgin, awaked and guided by love, goes before the appearance of Aurora to a valley, where she waits for the coming of her lover, who, at the rising of the sun, is to offer a sacrifice to the gods. Her soul, in the soft situation in which she is placed by the hopes of approaching happiness, indulges, while waiting

passages; five of which, at least, are so direct and close as to leave no shadow of a

for him, the pleasure of contemplating the beauties of nature, and the rising of that luminary that was to bring the object of her tenderness." She expresses herself thus :

"Already the sun gilds the top of those antique oaks, and the waves of those falling torrents that roar among the rocks shine with his beams; already I perceive the summit of those shaggy mountains whence arises the vaults which, half concealed in the air, offer a formidable retreat to the solitary who there retires (1). Night folds up her veil Ye wanton fires, that mislead the wandering traveller, retire (2) to the quagmires and marshy fens; and thou sun, lord of the heavens, who fillest the air with reviving heat, who sowest with dewy pearls the flowers of these meadows, and givest colours to the varied beauties of nature, receive my first homage (3), and hagen thy course. Thy appearance proclaims

- (1) How nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
Embosom yon fair mansion!

On the shaggy mound,
Where tumbling torrents roar around;
Where pendent mountains o'er your head
Stretch a formidable shade—
Where lull'd in pious peace the hermit lies.

- (2) Away, ye goblins all,
Wont the bewilder'd traveller to daunt—

- (3) Hail to thy living light
Ambrosial Morn—
That bids each dewy-spangled floweret rise,
And dart around its vermeil dies—
Unfolds the scene of glory to our eye,
Where, throned in artless majesty,
The cherub Beauty sits on Nature's rustic shrine.—

doubt, and therefore confirm all the rest. It is a phænomenon that you will be in the

that of my lover. Freed from the pious cares that detain him still at the foot of the altars, love will soon bring him to mine (4). Let all around me partake of my joy. Let all bless the rising luminary by which we are enlightened. Ye flowers, that enclose in your bosoms the odours that cool night condenses there, open your buds, and exhale in the air your balmy vapours. I know not whether the delightful intoxication that possesses my soul, does not embellish whatever I behold; but the rivulet, that in pleasing meanders winds along this valley, enchants me with his murmurs. Zephyrus caresses me with his breath; the fragrant plants, pressed under my feet, waft to my senses their perfume. Oh! if Felicity sometimes condescends to visit the abodes of mortals, to these places, doubtless, she retires (5). But with what secret trouble am I agitated? Already impatience mingles its poison with the sweetness of my expectation. This valley has already lost all its beauties. Is Joy then so fleeting? It is as easy to snatch it from us, as for the light down of these plants to be blown away by the breath of the Zephyrs (6). In vain have I recourse to flattering

- (4) 'Twill not be long, ere his unbending mind
Shall lose in sweet oblivion every care
Among the embowering shades that veil Elfrida.

(5) The soft air
Salutes me with most cool and temperate breath,
And, as I tread, the flower-besprinkled lawn
Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess,
If e'er content deign'd visit mortal clime,
This was her place of dearest residence.

- (6) For safety now sits wavering on your love,
Like the light down upon the thistle's beard,
Which every breeze may part.

right to inform yourself about, and which I long to understand. Another phænomenon

hope. Each moment increases my disturbance. He will come no more. Who keeps him at a distance from me? What duty more sacred than that of calming the inquietudes of love? But what do I say? Fly, jealous suspicions, injurious to his fidelity, (7) and formed to extinguish my tenderness. If jealousy grows by the side of love, it will stifle it, if not pulled up by the roots; it is the ivy which, by a verdant chain, embraces, but dries up the trunk which serves for its support (8). I know my lover too well to doubt of his tenderness. He, like me, has, far from the pomps of courts, sought the tranquil asylum of the fields. Touched by the simplicity of my heart, and by my beauty, my sensual rivals call him in vain to their arms. Shall he be seduced by the advances of coquetry, which, on the cheek of the young maid, tarnishes the snow of innocence and the carnation of modesty, and daubs it with the whiteness of art and the paint of effrontery? (9) What do I say? his contempt for her is perhaps only a snare for me. Can I be ignorant of the partiality of men, and the arts they employ to seduce us? Nourished in a contempt for our sex, it is not us, it is

(7) Avaunt! ye vain delusive fear.

(8) See Elfrida.

Ah see! how round yon branching elm the ivy,
Clasps its *green chain*, and poisons what supports it.
Not less injurious to the shoots of love
Is sickly jealousy.

(9)—To guard

Your beauties from the blast of courtly gales.
'The crimson blush of virgin modesty,
The delicate soft tints of innocence,
There all fly off, and leave no boast behind
But well-ranged, faded features.

is, that I read it without finding it out: all I remember is, that I thought it not at all

their pleasures that they love. Cruel as they are, they have placed in the rank of the virtues the barbarous fury of revenge, and the mad love of their country; but never have they reckoned fidelity among the virtues. Without remorse they abuse innocence, and often their vanity contemplates our griefs with delight. But no; fly far from me, ye odious thoughts, my lover will come! A thousand times have I experienced it: As soon as I perceive him, my agitated mind is calm, and I often forget the too just cause I have for complaint; for near him I can only know happiness (10). Yet if he is treacherous to me; if, in the very moment when my love excuses him, he consummates the crime of infidelity in another bosom, may all nature take up arms in revenge! may he perish! What do I say? Ye elements, be deaf to my cries! Thou earth, open not thy profound abyss! let the monster walk the time prescribed him on thy splendid surface, let him still commit new crimes, and still cause the tears of the too credulous maids to flow: and if heaven avenges them and punishes him, may it at least be at the prayer of some other unfortunate woman (11)."

Here ends this odd instance of plagiarism. When M. Helvetius was in England, a year or two after I had made the disco-

(10)—My truant heart

Forgets each lesson that Resentment taught,
And in thy sight knows only to be happy.

In the French it is more literal, "Pres de lui je ne sçais qu'être heureuse."

(11) Till then, ye elements, rest; and thou, firm earth,
Ope not thy yawning jaws; but let this monster
Stalk his due time on thine affrighted surface:
Yes, let him still go on, still execute
His savage purposes and daily make
More widows weep, as I do.

English, and did not much like it; and the reason is plain, for the lyric flights and choral flowers suited not in the least with the circumstances or character of the speaker, as he had contrived it.

CXVII.

TO MR. BROWN.*

February 17, 1763.

You will make my best acknowledgments to Mr. How; who, not content to rank me in the number of his friends, is so polite as to make excuses for having done me that honour.

very of it, I took my measures (as Mr. Gray advised me) to learn how he came by it; and accordingly requested two noblemen, to whom he was introduced, to ask him some questions concerning it; but I could gain no satisfactory answer. I do not, however, by any means, suppose that the person who cooked up the disjointed parts of my drama into this strange fricasse, was M. Helvetius himself; I rather imagine (as I did from the first) that he was imposed upon by some young English traveller who contrived this expedient in order to pass with him for a poet. The great philosopher, it is true, has in this note been proved to be the receiver of stolen goods; but out of respect to his numerous, fashionable disciples, both abroad, and at home, whose credit might suffer with that of their master, I acquit him of what would only be held criminal at the Old Bailey, that he received these goods *knowing them to be stolen*.

* Since of Pembroke-Hall.

I was not born so far from the sun, as to be ignorant of count Algarotti's name and reputation; nor am I, so far advanced in years, or in philosophy, as not to feel the warmth of his approbation. The odes in question, as their motto shows, were meant to be *vocal to the intelligent alone*. How few they were in my own country, Mr. How can testify; and yet my ambition was terminated by that small circle. I have good reason to be proud, if my voice has reached the ear and apprehension of a stranger, distinguished as one of the best judges in Europe.

I am equally pleased with the just applause he bestows on Mr. Mason; and particularly on his *Caractacus*, which is the work of a man: whereas *Elfrida* is only that of a boy, a promising boy indeed, and of no common genius: yet this is the popular performance, and the other little known in comparison.

Neither count Algarotti nor Mr. How (I believe) have heard of Ossian, the son of Fingal. If Mr. How were not upon the wing, and on his way homewards, I would send it to him in Italy. He would there see that imagination dwelt many hundred years ago, in all her pomp, on the cold and barren mountains of Scotland. The truth (I be-

lieve) is, that, without any respect of climates, she reigns in all nascent societies of men, where the necessities of life force every one to think and act much for himself.*

CXVIII.

COUNT ALGAROTTI TO MR. GRAY.

Pisa, 24 Aprile, 1763.

Sono stato lungo tempo in dubbio se un dilettante quale io sono, dovea mandare alcune sue coserelle a un professore quale è V. S. Ill^{mo}, a un arbitro di ogni poetica eleganza. Nè ci volea meno che l'autorità del valorissimo Sigr. How per persuadermi a ciò fare. V. S. Ill^{mo} accolga queste mie coserelle con quella medesima bontà con cui ha voluto accogliere quella lettera che

* One is led to think from this paragraph that the scepticism, which Mr. Gray had expressed before, concerning these works of Ossian, was now entirely removed. I know no way of accounting for this (as he had certainly received no stronger evidence of their authenticity) but from the turn of his studies at the time. He had of late much busied himself in antiquities, and consequently had imbibed too much of the spirit of a professed antiquarian; now we know, from a thousand instances, that no set of men are more willingly duped than these, especially by any thing that comes to them under the fascinating form of a new discovery.

dice pur poco delle tante cose, che fanno sentire alle anime armoniche di ammirabili suoi versi. Io sarò per quanto io porrò, *Præco laudum tuarum*, e quella mia lettera si stamperà in un nuovo Giornale, che si fa in Venezia, intitolato *la Minerva*, perchè sappia la Italia che la Inghilterra, ricca di un Omero* di uno Archimede,† di un Demostene,‡ non manca del suo Pindaro. Al Sigr. How le non saprei dire quanti obblighi io abbia, ma sì maggiore e certamente quello di avermi presentato alla sua Musa e di avermi procurato la occasione di poterla assicurare della perfetta ed altissima stima, con cui io ho l'onore di sottoscrivermi,

De V. S. Illusmo
Dexotis. &c.

ALGAROTTI.

CXIX.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, August 5, 1763.

You may well wonder at my long taciturnity.
I wonder too, and know not what cause to

* Milton.

† Newton.

‡ Mr. Pitt.

assign ; for it is certain I think of you daily. I believe it is owing to the nothingness of my history ; for except six weeks that I passed in town towards the end of the spring, and a little jaunt to Epsom and Box-hill, I have been here time out of mind, in a place where no events grow, though we preserve those of former days, by way of *Hortus siccus*, in our libraries.

I doubt you have not yet read Rousseau's *Emile*. Every body that has children should read it more than once : for though it abounds with his usual glorious absurdity, though his general scheme of education be an impracticable chimera, yet there are a thousand lights struck out, a thousand important truths better expressed than ever they were before, that may be of service to the wisest men. Particularly, I think he has observed children with more attention, and knows their meaning and the working of their little passions better than any other writer. As to his religious discussions, which have alarmed the world, and engaged their thoughts more than any other part of his book, I set them all at naught, and wish they had been omitted.*

* That I may put together the rest of Mr. Gray's sentiments concerning this singular writer, I insert here an extract from a
VOL. IV.

CXX.

TO MR. HOW.

Cambridge, Sept. 10, 1763.

I OUGHT long since to have made you my acknowledgments for the obliging testimonies of your esteem that you have conferred upon me ; but count Algarotti's books* did not come to my hands till the end of July, and since that time I have been prevented by

letter of a later date, written to myself. " I have not read the Philosophic Dictionary. I can now stay with great patience for any thing that comes from Voltaire. They tell me it is frippery, and blasphemy, and wit. I could have forgiven myself if I had not read Rousseau's *Lettres de la Montagne*. Always excepting the *Contract Social*, it is the dullest performance he ever published. It is a weak attempt to separate the miracles from the morality of the Gospel. The latter (he would have you think) he believes was sent from God ; and the former he very explicitly takes for an imposture : this is in order to prove the cruelty and injustice of the state of Geneva in burning his *Emile*. The latter part of his book is to show the abuses that have crept into the constitution of his country, which point (if you are concerned about it) he makes out very well ; and his intention in this is plainly to raise a tumult in the city, and to be revenged on the *Petit Conseil*, who condemned his writings to the flames."

* Three small treatises on painting, the opera, and the French academy for painters in Italy : they have been since collected in the Leghorn edition of his works.

illness from doing any of my duties. I have read them more than once, with increasing satisfaction; and should wish mankind had eyes to descry the genuine sources of their own pleasures, and judgment to know the extent that nature has prescribed to them: if this were the case, it would be their interest to appoint count Algarotti their "arbiter elegantiarum." He is highly civil to our nation; but there is one point in which he does not do us justice: I am the more solicitous about it, because it relates to the only taste we can call our own; the only proof of our original talent in matters of pleasure, I mean our skill in gardening, or rather laying out grounds; and this is no small honour to us, since neither Italy nor France have ever had the least notion of it, nor yet do at all comprehend it when they see it. That the Chinese have this beautiful art in high perfection, seems very probable from the Jesuits' Letters, and more from Chambers's little discourse, published some years ago;* but it is very certain we copied nothing

* The author has since enlarged, and published it under the title of a Dissertation on Oriental Gardening; in which he has put it out of all doubt, that the Chinese and English tastes are totally dissimilar.

from them, nor had any thing but nature for our model. It is not forty years since the art was born among us;* and it is sure that there was nothing in Europe like it; and as sure, we then had no information on this head from China at all.†

I shall rejoice to see you in England, and talk over these and many other matters with you at leisure. Do not despair of your health, because you have not found all the effects you had promised yourself from a finer climate. I have known people who have experienced the same thing, and yet, at their return, have lost all their complaints as by miracle.

P.S. I have answered count Algarotti's letter, and his to Mr. Mason I conveyed to him; but whether he has received his books, I have not yet heard.

Mr. How, on receiving the foregoing letter, communicated the objection which it contained to the count; who, admitting the

* See Mr. Walpole's history of this art at the end of the last volume of his *Anecdotes of Painters*.

† I question whether this be not saying too much. Sir William Temple's account of the Chinese gardens was published some years before this period; and it is probable that might have promoted our endeavours, not indeed of imitating them, but of imitating (what he said was their archetype) Nature.

justness of it, altered the passage, as appears from the following extract of the answer which he sent to that gentleman:

“Mi spiace solamente che quella critica concernente i Giardini Inglesi non la abbia fatta á medesimo ; quasi egli dovesse credermi piu amico della mia opinione che della verit . Ecco, come ho cangiato qual luogo. Dopo le parole *nel tesser la favola di un poema*. “Simili ai Giardini della Cina sono quelli che piantano gl’ Inglesi dietro al medesimo modello, della natura.” Quanto ella ha di vago,   di vario, boschetti, collinette, acque vive, praterie con dei tempietti, degli obelischi, ed anche di belle rovine che spuntano qu  e l , si trova quivi reunito dal gusto dei Kent, e dei Chambers,* che hanno di tanto sorpassato il le Nautre, tenuto gi  il maestro dell’ Architettura, diro cosi, de’ Giardini. Dalle Ville d’Inghilterra   sbandita la simmetria Francese, i pi  bei siti pajono naturali, il culto   misto col negletto,   il disordine che vi regna   l’effetto dell’ arte la meglio ordinata.”

It is seldom that an author of a reputation so established (as Mr. How truly re-

* As he had written on the subject, this mistake was natural enough in count Algarotti.

marked, when he sent this extract to Mr. Gray) so easily, readily, and explicitly gives up his own opinion to that of another, or even to conviction itself; nor perhaps would count Algarotti have done so, had he not been thoroughly apprised to whose correction he submitted.

CXXI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Sunday, December 30, 1764.

I HAVE received the Castle of Otranto, and return you my thanks for it. It engages our attention here,* makes some of us cry a little, and all in general afraid to go to bed o' nights. We take it for a translation, and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicholas.

When your pen was in your hand you might have been a little more communicative: for though disposed enough to believe the opposition rather consumptive, I am entirely ignorant of all the symptoms. Your canonical book I have been reading

* At Cambridge.

with great satisfaction. He speaketh as one having authority. If Englishmen have any feeling left, methinks they must feel now; and if the ministry have any feeling (whom nobody will suspect of insensibility) they must cut off the author's ears, for it is in all the forms, a most wicked libel. Is the old man and the lawyer put on, or is it real? or has some real lawyer furnished a good part of the materials, and another person employed them? This I guess; for there is an uncouthness of diction in the beginning, which is not supported throughout—though it now and then occurs again, as if the writer was weary of supporting the character he had assumed, when the subject had warmed him beyond dissimulation.*

Rousseau's letters† I am reading heavily, heavily! He justifies himself, till he convinces me that he deserved to be burnt, at least that his book did. I am not got through him, and you never will. Voltaire I detest,

* Mr. Gray may probably allude to a pamphlet, called "A letter concerning libels, warrants, seizure of papers, and security for the peace or behaviour, with a view to some late proceedings, and the defence of them by the majority."—Supposed to have been written by William Graves, esq. a master in chancery, under the inspection of the late lord Camden. B.

† The Lettres de la Montagne.

and have not seen his book: I shall in good time. You surprise me, when you talk of going* in February. Pray, does all the minority go too? I hope you have a reason. Desperare de republicâ is a deadly sin in politics.

Adieu! I will not take my leave of you; for (you perceive) this letter means to beg another, when you can spare a little.

CXXII.

TO MR. PALGRAVE.†

March, 1765.

My instructions, of which you are so desirous, are two-fold: the first part relates to what is past, and that will be rather diffuse: the second, to what is to come; and that we shall treat more succinctly, and with all due brevity.

First, when you come to Paris, you will not fail to visit the cloister of the Char treuse, where Le Sueur (in the history of

* To Paris.

† Mr. Gray's correspondent was now making the tour of France and Italy.

St. Bruno) has almost equalled Raphael. Then your Gothic inclinations will naturally lead you to the Sainte Chapelle built by St. Louis: in the treasury is preserved one of the noblest gems of the Augustan age. When you take a trip into the country, there is a fine old chapel at Vincennes with admirable painted windows; and at Fontainebleau, the remains of Francis the First's magnificence might give you some pleasure. In your way to Lyons you will take notice of the view over the Saone, from about Tournus and Macon. Fail not to walk a few miles along the banks of the Rhone, down the river. I would certainly make a little journey to the Grand Chartreuse, up the mountains: at your return out of Italy this will have little effect. At Turin you will visit the Capuchins' convent just without the city, and the Superga at no great distance, for the sake of the views. At Genoa observe the Terreno of the palace Brignoli, as a model of an apartment elegantly disposed in a hot climate. At Parma you will adore the great Madonna and St. Jerom, once at St. Antonio Abbate, but now (I am told) in the Ducal Palace. In the Madonna della Steccata observe the Moses breaking the Tables, a chiaroscuro figure of

the Parmeggiano at too great a height, and ill lighted, but immense. At the Capuchins, the great pieta of Annib. Caracci; in the villa Ducale, the room painted by Carlo Cignani; and the last works of Agostino Caracci at Modena.* I know not what re-

* When our author was himself in Italy, he studied with much attention the different manners of the old masters. I find a paper written at the time, in which he has set down several subjects proper for painting, which he had never seen executed, and has affixed the names of different masters to each piece, to show which of their pencils he thought would have been most proper to treat it. As I doubt not but this paper will be an acceptable present to the Reynoldses and Wests of the age, I shall here insert it.

" An Altar-Piece.—Guido.

The top, a Heaven; in the middle, at a distance, the Padre Eterno indistinctly seen, and lost, as it were, in glory. On either hand, Angels of all degrees in attitudes of adoration and wonder. A little lower, and next the eye, supported on the wings of Seraphs, Christ (the principal figure) with an air of calm and serene majesty, his hand extended, as commanding the elements to their several places: near him an Angel of superior rank bearing the golden compasses (that Milton describes); beneath, the Chaos, like a dark and turbulent ocean, only illuminated by the Spirit, who is brooding over it.

A small picture.—Correggio.

Eve newly created, admiring her own shadow in the lake.

The famous Venus of this master, late in the possession of Sir William Hamilton, proves how judiciously Mr. Gray fixed upon his pencil for the execution of this charming subject.

mains now, the flower of the collection is gone to Dresden. Bologna is too vast a

Another.—Domenichino.

Medea in a pensive posture, with revenge and maternal affection striving in her visage; her two children at play, sporting with one another before her. On one side a bust of Jason, to which they bear some resemblance.

A Statue.—Michael Angelo.

Agave in the moment she returns to her senses: the head of her son, fallen on the ground from her hand.

Vide Ovid. Met. lib. iii. l. 701, &c. M.

A picture.—Salvator Rosa.

Æneas and the Sibyl sacrificing to Pluto by torch-light in the wood, the assistants in a fright. The day beginning to break so as dimly to show the mouth of the cavern.

Sigismonda with the heart of Guiscardo before her. I have seen a small print on this subject, where the expression is admirable, said to be graven from a picture of Correggio.

Afterwards, when he had seen the original in the possession of the late Sir Luke Schaub, he always expressed the highest admiration of it; though we see, by his here giving it to Salvator Rosa, he thought the subject too horrid to be treated by Correggio; and indeed I believe it is agreed that the capital picture in question is not of his hand.

Another.—Albano, or the Parmeggiano.

Iphigenia asleep by the fountain-side, her maids about her; Cymon gazing and laughing.

This subject has been often treated; once indeed very curiously by Sir Peter Lely, in the way of portrait, when his sacred Majesty

subject for me to treat; the palaces and churches are open; you have nothing to do but to see them all. In coming down the Apennine you will see (if the sun shines) all Tuscany before you. And so I have brought you to Florence, where to be sure there is nothing worth seeing. Secondly,
1. Vide, quodcunque videndum est.

Charles the Second represented Cymon, and the duchess of Cleveland and Mrs. Eleanor Gwin (in as indecent attitudes as his royal taste could prescribe) were Iphigenia and her attendants.

Another.—Domenichino, or the Caracci.

Electra with the urn, in which she imagined were her brother's ashes, lamenting over them; Orestes smothering his concern.

Another.—Correggio.

Ithuriel and Zephon entering the bower of Adam and Eve; they sleeping. The light to proceed from the Angels.

Another.—Nicholas Poussin.

Alcestis dying; her children weeping, and hanging upon her robe; the youngest of them, a little boy, crying too, but appearing rather to do so, because the others are afflicted, than from any sense of the reason of their sorrow: her right arm should be round this, her left extended towards the rest, as recommending them to her lord's care; he fainting, and supported by the attendants.

Salvator Rosa.

Hannibal passing the Alps; the mountaineers rolling down rocks upon his army; elephants tumbling down the precipices.

2. Quodcunque ego non vidi, id tu vide.
3. Quodcunque videris, scribe et describe; memoriæ ne fide.
4. Scribendo nil admirare; et cum pictor non sis, verbis omnia depinge.
5. Tritam viatorum compitam calca, et cum poteris desere.
6. Eme, quodcunque emendum est; I do not mean pictures, medals, gems, drawings, &c. only; but clothes, stockings, shoes, handkerchiefs, little moveables; every thing you may want all your life long: but have a care of the custom-house.

Pray present my most respectful compliments to Mr. Weddell.* I conclude when the winter is over, and you have seen Rome and Naples, you will strike out of the beaten path of English travellers, and

Another.—Domenichino.

Arria giving Claudius's order to Pætus, and stabbing herself at the same time.

N. Poussin, or Le Sueur.

Virginus murdering his daughter; Appius, at a distance, starting up from his tribunal; the people amazed, but few of them seeing the action itself."

* William Weddell, esq. of Newby in Yorkshire.

see a little of the country, throw yourselves into the bosom of the Apennine, survey the horrid lake of Amsanctus (look in Cluver's Italy), catch the breezes on the coast of Taranto and Salerno, expatiate to the very toe of the continent, perhaps strike over the Faro of Messina, and having measured the gigantic columns of Girgenti, and the tremendous caverns of Syracuse, refresh yourselves amidst the fragrant vale of Euna. Oh! che bel riposo! Addio.

CXXIII.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Glasgow-Castle, Sept. 8, 1765.

A LITTLE journey I have been making to Arbroath has been the cause that I did not answer your very obliging letter so soon as I ought to have done. A man of merit, that honours me with his esteem, and has the frankness to tell me so, doubtless can need no excuses: his apology is made, and we are already acquainted, however distant from each other.

I fear I cannot (as I would wish) do myself the pleasure of waiting on you at Aber-

deen, being under an engagement to go tomorrow to Taymouth, and, if the weather will allow it, to the Blair of Athol: this will take up four or five days, and at my return the approach of winter will scarce permit me to think of any farther expeditions northwards. My stay here will, however, be a fortnight or three weeks longer; and if in that time any business or invitation should call you this way, lord Strathmore gives me commission to say, he shall be extremely glad to see you at Glames; and doubt not it will be a particular satisfaction to me to receive and thank you in person for the favourable sentiments you have entertained of me, and the civilities with which you have honoured me.

CXXIV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Glames-Castle, Sept. 14. 1765.

I DEFERRED writing to you till I had seen a little more of this country than yourself had seen; and now being just returned from an excursion, which I and major Lyon have been making into the Highlands, I sit down

to give you an account of it. But first I must return to my journey hither, on which I shall be very short; partly because you know the way as far as Edinburgh, and partly that there was not a great deal worth remarking. The first night we passed at Tweedmouth (77 miles); the next at Edinburgh (53 miles); where lord Strathmore left the major and me, to go to Lennox-Love, (lord Blantyre's) where his aunt lives: so that afternoon and all next day I had leisure to visit the castle, Holyrood-house, Heriot's hospital, Arthur's seat, &c. and am not sorry to have seen that most picturesque (at a distance), and nastiest (when near) of all capital cities. I supped with Dr. Robertson and other literati, and the next morning lord Strathmore came for us. We crossed at the Queen's Ferry in a four-oared yawl without a sail, and were tossed about rather more than I should wish to hazard again; lay at Perth, a large Scotch town with much wood about it, on the banks of the Tay, a very noble river; next morning ferried over it, and came by dinner-time to Glames; being (from Edinburgh) 67 miles, which makes in all (from Hetton) 197 miles. The castle*

* This is said to be the very castle in which Duncan was murdered by Macbeth.

stands in Strathmore (i. e. the Great Valley) which winds about from Stonehaven on the east coast of Kincardineshire, obliquely, as far as Stirling, near 100 miles in length, and from seven to ten miles in breadth, cultivated every where to the foot of the hills, on either hand, with oats or here, a species of barley, except where the soil is mere peat-earth, (black as a coal) or barren sand covered only with broom and heath, or a short grass fit for sheep. Here and there appear, just above ground, the huts of the inhabitants, which they call towns, built of, and covered with, turf; and among them, at great distances, the gentlemen's houses, with enclosures, and a few trees round them.

Amidst these the castle of Glames distinguishes itself, the middle part of it rising proudly out of what seems a great and thick wood of tall trees, with a cluster of hanging towers on the top. You descend to it gradually from the south, through a double and triple avenue of Scotch firs 60 or 70 feet high, under three gateways. This approach is a full mile long; and when you have passed the second gate, the firs change to limes, and another oblique avenue goes off on either hand towards the offices. These, as well as all the enclosures that surround

the house, are bordered with three or four ranks of sycamores, ashes, and white poplars of the noblest height, and from 70 to 100 years old. Other alleys there are, that go off at right angles with the long one; small groves, and walled gardens, of earl Patrick's planting, full of broad-leaved elms, oaks, birch, black cherry-trees, laburnums, &c. all of great stature and size, which have not till this week begun to show the least sense of morning frosts. The third gate delivers you into a court with a broad pavement, and grassplats adorned with statues of the four Stuart Kings, bordered with old silver firs and yew-trees, alternately, and opening with an iron palisade on either side to two square old fashioned parterres surrounded by stone fruit-walls. The house, from the height of it, the greatness of its mass, the many towers atop, and the spread of its wings, has really a very singular and striking appearance, like nothing I ever saw. You will comprehend something of its shape from the plan of the second floor, which I enclose. The wings are about 50 feet high; the body (which is the old castle, with walls 10 feet thick) is near 100. From the leads I see to the south of me (just at the end of the avenue) the little town of Glames, the

houses built of stone, and slated, with a neat kirk and small square tower (a rarity in this region.) Just beyond it rises a beautiful round hill, and another ridge of a longer form adjacent to it, both covered with woods of tall fir. Beyond them, peep over the black hills of Sid-law, over which winds the road to Dundee. To the north, within about seven miles of me, begin to rise the Grampians, hill above hill, on whose tops three weeks ago I could plainly see some traces of the snow that fell in May last. To the east, winds a way to the Strath, such as I have before described it, among the hills, which sink lower and lower as they approach the sea. To the west, the same valley (not plain, but broken, unequal ground) runs on for above 20 miles in view: there I see the crags above Dunkeld; there Beni-Gloe and Beni-More rise above the clouds; and there is that She-khallian, that spires into a cone above them all, and lies at least 45 miles (in a direct line) from this place.

Lord Strathmore, who is the greatest farmer in this neighbourhood, is from break of day to dark night among his husbandmen and labourers: he has near 2000 acres of land in his own hands, and is at present em-

ployed in building a low wall of four miles long, and in widening the bed of the little river Deane, which runs to south and south-east of the house, from about twenty to fifty feet wide, both to prevent inundations, and to drain the lake of Forfar. This work will be two years more in completing, and must be three miles in length. All the Highlanders that can be got are employed in it; many of them know no English, and I hear them singing Erse songs all day long. The price of labour is eight-pence a day; but to such as will join together, and engage to perform a certain portion in a limited time, two shillings.

I must say that all his labours seem to prosper; and my lord has casually found in digging such quantities of shell-marl, as not only fertilize his own grounds, but are disposed of at a good price to all his neighbours. In his nurseries are thousands of oaks, beech, larches, horse-chesnuts, spruce-firs, &c. thick as they can stand, and whose only fault is, that they are grown tall and vigorous before he has determined where to plant them out; the most advantageous spot we have for beauty lies west of the house, where (when the stone-walls of the meadows are taken away) the grounds, naturally un-

equal, will have a very park-like appearance: they are already full of trees, which need only thinning here and there to break the regularity of their trout-stream which joins the river Deane hard by. Pursuing the course of this brook upwards, you come to a narrow sequestered valley sheltered from all winds, through which it runs murmuring among great stones; on one hand the ground gently rises into a hill, on the other are the rocky banks of the rivulet almost perpendicular, yet covered with sycamore, ash, and fir, that (though it seems to have no place or soil to grow in) yet has risen to a good height, and forms a thick shade: you may continue along this gill, and passing by one end of the village and its church for half a mile, it leads to an opening between the two hills covered with fir-woods, that I mentioned above, through which the stream makes it way, and forms a cascade of ten or twelve feet over broken rocks. A very little art is necessary to make all this a beautiful scene. The weather, till the last week, has been in general very fine and warm; we have had no fires till now, and often have sat with the windows open an hour after sun-set: now and then a shower has come, and sometimes sudden gusts of

wind descend from the mountains, that finish as suddenly as they arose; but to-day it blows a hurricane. Upon the whole, I have been exceeding lucky in my weather, and particularly in my Highland expedition of five days.

We set out then the 11th of September, and continuing along the Strath to the west, passed through *Megill*, (where is the tomb of *Queen Wanders*, that was riven to death by stoned horses for nae gude that she did; so the women there told me, I assure you) through Cowper of Angus; over the river *Ila*; then over a wide and dismal heath, fit for an assembly of witches, till we came to a string of four small lakes in a valley, whose deep blue waters and green margin, with a gentleman's house or two seated on them in 'little groves, contrasted with the black desert in which they were enchased. The ground now grew unequal; the hills, more rocky, seemed to close in upon us, till the road came to the brow of a steep descent, and (the sun then setting) between two woods of oak we saw far below us the river *Tay* come sweeping along at the bottom of a precipice, at least 150 feet deep, clear as glass, full to the brim, and very rapid in its course; it seemed to issue out of woods thick and

tall, that rose on either hand, and were over-hung by broken rocky crags of vast height; above them, to the west, the tops of higher mountains appeared, on which the evening clouds reposed. Down by the side of the river, under the thickest shades, is seated the town of Dunkeld; in the midst of it stands a ruined cathedral, the towers and shell of the building still entire: a little beyond it, a large house of the duke of Athol, with its offices and gardens, extends a mile beyond the town; and as his grounds were interrupted by the streets and roads, he has flung arches of communication across them, that add to the scenery of the place, which of itself is built of good white stone, and handsomely slated; so that no one would take it for a Scotch town till they come into it. Here we passed the night; if I told you how, you would bless yourself.

Next day we set forward to Taymouth, 27 miles farther west; the road winding through beautiful woods, with the Tay almost always in full view to the right, being here from 3 to 400 feet over. The Strath-Tay, from a mile to three miles or more wide, covered with corn, and spotted with groups of people then in the midst of their harvest; on either hand a vast chain of rocky

mountains that changed their face and opened something new every hundred yards, as the way turned, or the clouds passed: in short, altogether it was one of the most pleasing days I have passed these many years, and at every step I wished for you. At the close of day we came to *Balloch*,* so the place was called; but now *Taymouth*, improperly enough; for here it is that the river issues out of Loch-Tay, a glorious lake 15 miles long and one mile and a half broad, surrounded with prodigious mountains; there on its north-eastern brink, impending over it, is the vast hill of Lawers; to the east is that enormous creature, *Shekhallian* (i. e. the maiden's pap) spiring above the clouds: directly west, beyond the end of the lake, *Beni-more*; the great mountain rises to a most awful height, and looks down on the tomb of Fingal. Lord Breadalbane's *policy* (so they call here all such ground as is laid out for pleasure) takes in about 2000 acres, of which his house, offices, and a deer-park, about three miles round, occupy the plain or bottom, which is little above a mile in breadth; through it winds the Tay, which, by means of a bridge,

* Mr. Pennant, in his tour in Scotland, explains this word "the Mouth of the Loch."

I found here to be 156 feet over: his plantations and woods rise with the ground, on either side the vale, to the very summit of the enormous crags that overhang it: along them, on the mountain's side, runs a terras a mile and a half long, that overlooks the course of the river. From several seats and temples perched on particular rocky eminences, you command the lake for many miles in length, which turns like some huge river, and loses itself among the mountains that surround it; at its eastern extremity, where the river issues out of it, on a peninsula my lord has built a neat little town and church with a high square tower; and just before it lies a small round island in the lake, covered with trees, amongst which are the ruins of some little religious house.

Trees, by the way, grow here to great size and beauty. I saw four old chesnuts in the road, as you enter the park, of vast bulk and height; one beech tree I measured that was 16 feet 7 inches in the girth, and, I guess, near 80 feet in height. The gardener presented us with peaches, nectarines, and plumbs from the stone-walls of the kitchen-garden (for there are no brick nor hot walls); the peaches were good, the rest well tasted, but scarce ripe; we had

also golden pippins from an espalier, not ripe, and a melon very well flavoured and fit to cut : of the house I have little to say ; it is a very good nobleman's house, handsomely furnished and well kept, very comfortable to inhabit, but not worth going far to see. Of the earl's taste I have not much more to say ; it is one of those noble situations that man cannot spoil : it is however certain, that he has built an inn and a town just where his principal walks should have been, and in the most wonderful spot of ground that perhaps belongs to him. In this inn however we lay ; and next day, returning down the river four miles, we passed it over a fine bridge, built at the expense of the government, and continued our way to *Logie-Rait*, just below which, in a most charming scene, the *Tummel*, which is here the larger river of the two, falls into the Tay. We ferried over the *Tummel* in order to get into Marshal Wade's road, which leads from Dunkeld to Inverness, and continued our way along it toward the north : the road is excellent, but dangerous enough in conscience ; the river often running directly under us at the bottom of a precipice 200 feet deep, sometimes masked indeed by wood that finds means to grow where I could

not stand, but very often quite naked and without any defence: in such places we walked for miles together, partly for fear, and partly to admire the beauty of the country, which the beauty of the weather set off to the greatest advantage: as evening came on, we approached the pass of Gilli-krankie, where, in the year 1745, the Hessians, with their prince at their head, stopped short, and refused to march a foot farther.

Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus Orci, stands the solitary mansion of Mr. Robertson, of Fascley; close by it rises a hill covered with oak, with grotesque masses of rock staring from among their trunks, like the sullen countenances of Fingal and all his family, frowning on the little mortals of modern days: from between this hill and the adjacent mountains, pent in a narrow channel, comes roaring out the river Tummel, and falls headlong down involved in white foam which rises into a mist all round it: but my paper is deficient, and I must say nothing of the pass itself, the black river Garry, the Blair of Athol, mount Beni-Gloe, my return by another road to Dunkeld, the Hermitage, the *Stra-Bram*, and the Rumbling Brig; in short, since I saw the Alps, I

have seen nothing sublime till now. In about a week I shall set forward, by the Stirling road, on my return all alone. Pray for me till I see you, for I dread Edinburgh and the itch, and expect to find very little in my way worth the perils I am to endure.

CXXV.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Glasgow Castle, Oct. 2. 1765.

I MUST beg you would present my most grateful acknowledgments to your society for the public mark of their esteem, which you say they are disposed to confer on me.* I embrace, with so deep and just a sense of their goodness, the substance of that honour they do me, that I hope it may plead my pardon with them if I do not accept the form. I have been, sir, for several years a member of the university of Cambridge, and formerly (when I had some thoughts of the profession) took a bachelor of laws' degree

* The Marischal College of Aberdeen had desired to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Gray to receive from them the degree of doctor of laws. Mr. afterwards Dr. Beattie wrote to him on the subject, and this is the answer.

there; since that time, though long qualified by my standing, I have always neglected to finish my course, and claim my doctor's degree: judge, therefore, whether it will not look like a slight, and some sort of contempt, if I receive the same degree from a sister university. I certainly would avoid giving any offence to a set of men, among whom I have passed so many easy, and I may say, happy hours of my life; yet shall ever retain in my memory the obligations you have laid me under, and be proud of my connection with the university of Aberdeen.

It is a pleasure to me to find that you are not offended with the liberties I took when you were at Glames; you took me too literally, if you thought I meant in the least to discourage you in your pursuit of poetry: all I intended to say was, that if either vanity (that is, a general and undistinguishing desire of applause), or interest, or ambition has any place in the breast of a poet, he stands a great chance in these our days of being severely disappointed; and yet, after all these passions are suppressed, there may remain in the mind of one, "*ingenti percussus amore*," (and such I take you to be) incitements of a better sort, strong enough to make him write verse all his life, both

for his own pleasure and that of all posterity.

I am sorry for the trouble you have had to gratify my curiosity and love of superstition;* yet I heartily thank you. On Monday, sir, I set forward on my way to England; where if I can be of any little use to you, or should ever have the good fortune to see you, it will be a particular satisfaction to me. Lord Strathmore and the family here desire me to make their compliments to you.

P. S. Remember Dryden, and be blind to all his faults.†

* Mr. Gray, when in Scotland, had been very inquisitive after the popular superstitions of the country; his correspondent sent him two books on this subject, foolish ones indeed, as might be expected, but the best that could be had; a History of Second-sight, and a History of Witches.

† Mr. Beattie, it seems, in their late interview, had expressed himself with less admiration of Dryden than Mr. Gray thought his due. He told him in reply, "that if there was any excellence in his own numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet; and pressed him with great earnestness to study him, as his choice of words and versification were singularly happy and harmonious."

CXXVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, December 13, 1768.

I AM very much obliged to you for the detail you enter into on the subject of your own health: in this you cannot be too circumstantial for me, who had received no account of you, but at second-hand—such as, that you were dangerously ill, and therefore went to France; that you meant to try a better climate, and therefore stayed at Paris; that you had relapsed, and were confined to your bed, and extremely in vogue, and supped in the best company, and were at all public diversions. I rejoice to find (improbable as it seemed) that all the wonderful part of this is strictly true, and that the serious part has been a little exaggerated. This latter I conclude not so much from your own account of yourself, as from the spirits in which I see you write; and long may they continue to support you! I mean in a reasonable degree of elevation: but if (take notice) they are so volatile, so flippant, as to suggest any of those doctrines of health, which you preach with all the

zeal of a French atheist; at least, if they really do influence your practice; I utterly renounce them and all their works. They are *evil spirits*, and will lead you to destruction.—You have long built your hopes on temperance, you say, and hardiness. On the first point we are agreed. The second has totally disappointed you, and *therefore* you will persist in it; by all means. But then be sure to persist too in being young, in stopping the course of time, and making the shadow return back upon your sun-dial. If you find this not so easy, acquiesce with a good grace in my *anilities*, put on your under-stockings of yarn or woollen, even in the night-time. Don't provoke me! or I shall order you two night-caps (which by the way would do your eyes good), and put a little of any French liqueur into your water: they are nothing but brandy and sugar, and among their various flavours some of them may surely be palatable enough. The pain in your feet I *can* bear; but I shudder at the sickness in your stomach, and the weakness, that still continues. I conjure you, as you love yourself; I conjure you by Strawberry, not to trifle with these edge-tools. There is no cure for the gout, when in the stomach, but to throw it into the limbs. There is no

relief for the gout in the limbs, but in gentle warmth and gradual perspiration.

I was much entertained with your account of our neighbours. As an Englishman and an Antigallican, I rejoice at their dullness and their nastiness: though I fear we shall come to imitate them in both. Their atheism is a little too much, too shocking to rejoice at. I have been long sick at it in their authors, and hated them for it: but I pity their poor innocent people of fashion. They were bad enough, when they believed every thing!

I have searched where you directed me; which I could not do sooner, as I was at London when I received your letter, and could not easily find her grace's works. Here they abound in every library. The print you ask after is the frontispiece to *Nature's pictures drawn by Fancy's pencil*. But lest there should be any mistake, I must tell you, the family are not at dinner, but sitting round a rousing fire and telling stories. The room is just such a one as we lived in at Rheims: I mean as to the glazing and ceiling. The chimney is supported by Caryatides: over the mantel piece the arms of the family. The duke and duchess are crowned with laurel. A servant stands be-

hind him, holding a hat and feather. Another is shutting a window. Diepenbecke delin. et (I think) S. Clouwe sculps. It is a very pretty and curious print, and I thank you for the sight of it. If it ever was a picture, what a picture to have!

I must tell you, that upon cleaning an old picture here at St. John's Lodge, which I always took for a Holbein; on a ring, which the figure wears, they have found H. H. It has been always called B. V. Fisher; but is plainly a layman, and probably sir Anthony Denny, who was a benefactor to the college.

What is come of your Sevigné-curiosity? I should be glad of a line now and then, when you have leisure. I wish you well, and am ever

Yours.

CXXVII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, March 5, 1766.

I AM amazed at myself when I think I have never wrote to you; to be sure it is the sin of witchcraft, or something worse. Had I

been married, like Mason, some excuse might be made for it; who (for the first time since that great event) has just thought fit to tell me that he never passed so happy a winter as the last, and this in spite of his anxieties, which he says might even make a part of his happiness; for his wife is by no means in health; she has a constant cough: yet he is assured her lungs are not affected, and that it is nothing of the consumptive kind. As to me, I have been neither happy nor miserable; but in a gentle stupefaction of mind, and very tolerable health of body hitherto. If they last, I shall not much complain. The accounts one has lately had from all parts, make me suppose you buried in the snow, like the old queen of Denmark. —As soon as you are dug out, I shall rejoice to hear your voice from the battlements of Old Park.

Every thing is politics. There are no literary productions worth your notice, at least of our country.—The French have finished their great Encyclopedia in 17 volumes; but there are many flimsy articles very hastily treated, and great incorrectness of the press. There are now 13 volumes of Buffon's Natural History; and he is not come to the monkeys yet, who are a nume-

rous people. The Life of Petrarch has entertained me; it is not well written, but very curious, and laid together from his own letters, and the original writings of the fourteenth century; so that he takes in much of the history of those obscure times, and the characters of many remarkable persons. There are two volumes quarto; and another, unpublished yet, will complete it.

Mr. Walpole writes me now and then a long and lively letter from Paris; to which place he went last year with the gout upon him, sometimes in his limbs, often in his stomach and head. He has got somehow well, (not by means of the climate, one would think) goes to all public places, sees all the best company, and is very much in fashion. He says he sunk like queen Eleanor at Charing-Cross, and has risen again at Paris. He returns in April. I saw the lady you inquire after, when I was last in London, and a prodigious fine one she is. She had a strong suspicion of rouge on her cheeks, a cage of foreign birds and a piping bulfinch at her elbow; two little dogs on a cushion in her lap, and a cockatoo on her shoulder; they were all exceeding glad to see me, and I them.

CXXVIII.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Pembroke-Hall, Aug. 26, 1766.

WHATEVER my pen may do, I am sure my thoughts expatiate no where oftener, or with more pleasure, than to Old Park. I hope you have made my peace with the angry little lady. It is certain, whether her name were in my letter or not, she was as present to my memory as the rest of the whole family; and I desire you would present her with two kisses in my name, and one a-piece to all the others; for I shall take the liberty to kiss them all, (great and small) as you are to be my proxy.

In spite of the rain, which I think continued, with very short intervals, till the beginning of this month, and quite effaced the summer from the year, I made a shift to pass May and June not disagreeably in Kent. —I was surprised at the beauty of the road to Canterbury, which (I know not why) had not struck me before. The whole country is a rich and well-cultivated garden; orchards, cherry-grounds, hop-gardens, intermixed with corn and frequent villages;

gentle risings covered with wood, and every where the Thames and Medway breaking in upon the landscape with all their navigation. It was indeed owing to the bad weather that the whole scene was dressed in that tender emerald green, which one usually sees only for a fortnight in the opening of the spring; and this continued till I left the country. My residence was eight miles east of Canterbury, in a little quiet valley on the skirts of Barham-Down.* In these parts the whole soil is chalk, and whenever it holds up, in half an hour it is dry enough to walk out. I took the opportunity of three or four days' fine weather to go into the isle of Thanet; saw Margate, (which is Bartholomew fair by the sea-side) Ramsgate, and other places there; and so came by Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Folkstone, and Hithe, back again. The coast is not like Hartlepool; there are no rocks, but only chalky cliffs of no great height till you come to Dover; there indeed they are noble and picturesque, and the opposite coasts of France begin to bound your view, which

* At Denton, where his friend the Rev. William Robinson, brother to Matthew Robinson, esq. late member for Canterbury, then resided.

was left before to range unlimited by any thing but the horizon; yet it is by no means a *shipless* sea, but every where peopled with white sails, and vessels of all sizes in motion: and take notice, (except in the isle, which is all corn-fields, and has very little enclosure) there are in all places hedge-rows, and tall trees even within a few yards of the beach. Particularly, Hithe stands on an eminence covered with wood. I shall confess we had fires at night (ay, and at day too) several times in June; but do not go and take advantage in the north at this, for it was the most untoward year that ever I remember.

Have you read the New Bath Guide? It is the only thing in fashion, and is a new and original kind of humour. Miss Prue's conversion, I doubt, you will paste down, as a certain Yorkshire baronet did before he carried it to his daughters: yet I remember you all read Crazy Tales without pasting. Buffon's first collection of monkies is come out, (it makes the 14th volume) something, but not much to my edification; for he is pretty well acquainted with their persons, but not with their manners.

My compliments to Mrs. Wharton and all your family; I will not name them, lest I should affront any body.

CXXIX.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.

It is long since that I heard you were gone in haste into Yorkshire on account of your mother's illness, and the same letter informed me that she was recovered, otherwise I had then wrote to you only to beg you would take care of her, and to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life one can never have any more than a single mother. You may think this is obvious, and (what you call) a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was at the same age (very near) as wise as you, and yet I never discovered this (with full evidence and conviction I mean) till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago, and seems but as yesterday, and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart.* Many a corollary could I

* He seldom mentioned his mother without a sigh. After his death her gowns and wearing apparel were found in a trunk in his apartments just as she had left them; it seemed as if he could never take the resolution to open it, in order to distribute them to his female relations, to whom, by his will, he bequeathed them.

draw from this axiom for your use, (not for my own) but I will leave you the merit of doing it for yourself. Pray tell me how your health is: I conclude it perfect, as I hear you offered yourself as a guide to Mr. Palgrave into the Sierra-Morena of Yorkshire. For me, I passed the end of May and all June in Kent, not disagreeably. In the west part of it, from every eminence, the eye catches some long reach of the Thames or Medway, with all their shipping: in the east, the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails and glittering blue expanse with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and corn. This sentence is so fine I am quite ashamed; but no matter! You must translate it into prose. Palgrave, if he heard it, would cover his face with his pudding sleeve. I do not tell you of the great and small beasts, and creeping things innumerable, that I met with, because you do not suspect that this world is inhabited by any thing but men and women, and clergy, and such two-legged cattle. Now I am here again very disconsolate, and all alone, for Mr. Brown is gone, and the cares of this world are coming thick upon me: you, I hope, are better off, riding and walking in the woods of Studley,

&c. &c. I must not wish for you here; besides I am going to town at Michaelmas, by no means for amusement.

CXXX.

TO MR. MASON.

March 22, 1757.

I BREAK in upon you at a moment, when we least of all are permitted to disturb our friends, only to say, that you are daily and hourly present to my thoughts. If the worst* be not yet past, you will neglect and pardon me: but if the last struggle be over; if the poor object of your long anxieties be no longer sensible to your kindness, or to her own sufferings, allow me (at least in idea, for what could I do, were I present, more than this?) to sit by you in silence, and pity from my heart, not her, who is at rest, but you, who lose her. May He, who made us, the

* As this little billet (which I received at the Hot-Wells at Bristol) then breathed, and still seems to breathe, the very voice of friendship in its tenderest and most pathetic note, I cannot refrain from publishing it in this place. I opened it almost at the precise moment when it would necessarily be the most affecting.

Master of our pleasures and of our pains,
preserve and support you! Adieu.

I have long understood how little you had
to hope.

CXXXI.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Old Park, near Darlington, Durham,
August 12, 1767.

I RECEIVED from Mr. Williamson that very obliging mark you were pleased to give me of your remembrance. Had I not entertained some slight hopes of revisiting Scotland this summer, and consequently of seeing you at Aberdeen, I had sooner acknowledged, by letter, the favour you have done me. Those hopes are now at an end; but I do not therefore despair of seeing again a country that has given me so much pleasure; nor of telling you, in person, how much I esteem you and (as you choose to call them) your amusements: the specimen of them, which you were so good as to send me, I think excellent; the sentiments are such as a melancholy imagination naturally suggests in solitude and silence, and that (though

light and business may suspend or banish them at times) return with but so much the greater force upon a feeling heart: the diction is elegant and unconstrained; not loaded with epithets and figures, nor flagging into prose; the versification is easy and harmonious. My only objection is * * *

You see, sir, I take the liberty you indulged me in, when I first saw you; and therefore I make no excuses for it, but desire you would take your revenge on me in kind.

I have read over (but too hastily) Mr. Ferguson's book. There are uncommon strains of eloquence in it: and I was surprised to find not one single idiom of his country (I think) in the whole work. He has not the fault you mention:* his applica-

* To explain this, I must take the liberty to transcribe a paragraph from Mr. Beattie's letter, dated March 30, to which the above is an answer: "A professor at Edinburgh has published an Essay on the History of Civil Society, but I have not seen it. It is a fault common to almost all our Scotch authors, that they are too metaphysical: I wish they would learn to speak more to the heart, and less to the understanding: but alas! this is a talent which Heaven only can bestow: whereas the philosophic spirit (as we call it) is merely artificial and level to the capacity of every man, who has much patience, a little learning, and no taste." He has since dilated on this just sentiment in his admirable Essay on the Immutability of Truth.

tion to the heart is frequent, and often successful. His love of Montesquieu and Tacitus has led him into a manner of writing too short-winded and sententious; which those great men, had they lived in better times and under a better government, would have avoided.

I know no pretence that I have to the honour lord Gray is pleased to do me:† but if his lordship chooses to own me, it certainly is not my business to deny it. I say not this merely on account of his quality, but because he is a very worthy and accomplished person. I am truly sorry for the great loss he has had since I left Scotland. If you should chance to see him, I will beg you to present my respectful humble service to his lordship.

I gave Mr. Williamson all the information I was able in the short time he stayed with me. He seemed to answer well the character you gave me of him: but what I chiefly envied in him, was his ability of walking all the way from Aberdeen to Cambridge, and back again; which if I possessed, you would soon see your obliged, &c.

† Lord Gray had said that our author was related to his family.

CXXXII.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Fembroke-Hall, Dec. 24, 1767.

SINCE I had the pleasure of receiving your last letter, which did not reach me till I had left the North, and was come to London, I have been confined to my room with a fit of the gout: now I am recovered and in quiet at Cambridge, I take up my pen to thank you for your very friendly offers, which have so much the air of frankness and real good meaning, that were my body as tractable and easy of conveyance as my mind, you would see me to-morrow in the chamber you have so hospitably laid out for me at Aberdeen. But, alas! I am a summer-bird, and can only sit drooping till the sun returns: even then too my wings may chance to be clipped, and little in plight for so distant an excursion.

The proposal you make me, about printing at Glasgow what little I have ever written, does me honour. I leave my reputation in that part of the kingdom to your care: and only desire you would not set your partiality to me and mine mislead you. If you

persist in your design, Mr. Foulis certainly ought to be acquainted with what I am now going to tell you. When I was in London the last spring, Dodsley, the bookseller, asked my leave to reprint, in a smaller form, all I ever published; to which I consented: and added, that I would send him a few explanatory notes; and if he would omit entirely the *Long Story* (which was never meant for the public, and only suffered to appear in that pompous edition because of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were not intelligible without it), I promised to send him something else to print instead of it, lest the bulk of so small a volume should be reduced to nothing at all. Now it is very certain that I had rather see them printed at Glasgow (especially as you will condescend to revise the press) than at London; but I know not how to retract my promise to Dodsley. By the way, you perhaps may imagine that I have some kind of interest in this publication; but the truth is, I have none whatever. The expense is his, and so is the profit, if there be any. I therefore told him the other day, in general terms, that I heard there would be an edition put out in Scotland, by a friend of mine, whom I could not refuse; and that, if so, I would send thither

a copy of the same notes and additions¹ that I had promised to send to him. This did not seem at all to cool his courage; Mr. Foulis must therefore judge for himself, whether he thinks it worth while to print what is going to be printed also at London. If he does, I will send him (in a packet to you) the same things I shall send to Dodsley. They are imitations of two pieces of old Norwegian poetry, in which there was a wild spirit that struck me: but for my paraphrases I cannot say much; you will judge. The rest are nothing but a few parallel passages, and small notes just to explain what people said at the time was wrapped in total darkness. You will please to tell me, as soon as you can conveniently, what Mr. Foulis says on this head; that (if he drops the design) I may save myself and you the trouble of this packet. I ask your pardon for talking so long about it; a little more, and my letter would be as big as all my works.

I have read, with much pleasure, an ode of yours (in which you have done me the honour to adopt a measure that I have used) on lord Hay's birth-day. Though I do not love panegyric, I cannot but applaud this, for there is nothing mean in it. The diction

is easy and noble, the texture of the thoughts lyric, and the versification harmonious. The few expressions I object to are * * *. These, indeed, are minutiae; but they weigh for something, as half a grain makes a difference in the value of a diamond.

CXXXIII.

TO MR. HOW.

Pembroke-Hall, Jan. 12, 1768.

I WAS willing to go through the eight volumes of count Algarotti's works, which you lately presented to the library of this college, before I returned you an answer: this must be my excuse to you for my silence. First, I condole with you, that so neat an edition should swarm in almost every page with errors of the press, not only in notes and citations from Greek, English and French authors, but in the Italian text itself, greatly to the disreputation of the Leghorn publishers. This is the only reason, I think, that could make an edition in England necessary; but, I doubt, you would not find the matter much mended here; our presses, as they improve in beauty, declining daily in

accuracy; besides, you would find the expense very considerable, and the sale in no proportion to it, as, in reality, it is but few people in England that read currently and with pleasure the Italian tongue, and the fine old editions of their capital writers are sold at London for a lower price than they bear in Italy. An English translation I can by no means advise; the justness of thought and good sense might remain, but the graces of elocution (which make a great part of Algarotti's merit) would be entirely lost, and that merely from the very different genius and complexion of the two languages.

Doubtless there can be no impropriety in your making the same present to the university that you have done to your own college. You need not at all to fear for the reputation of your friend: he has merit enough to recommend him in any country. A tincture of various sorts of knowledge, an acquaintance with all the beautiful arts, an easy command, a precision, warmth, and richness of expression, and a judgment that is rarely mistaken on any subject to which he applies it. I had read the *Congresso di Citera* before, and was excessively pleased with it, in spite of prejudice; for I am naturally no friend to allegory, nor to poetical

prose. The *Giudicio d' Amore* is an addition rather inferior to it. What gives me the least pleasure of any of his writings is the *Newtonianism* ; it is so direct an imitation of Fontenelle, a writer not easy to imitate, and least of all in the Italian tongue, whose character and graces are of a higher style, and never adapt themselves easily to the elegant *badinage* and *legereté* of conversation that sit so well on the French. The essays and letters (many of them entirely new to me) *on the Arts*, are curious and entertaining: those on other subjects (even where the thoughts are not new, but borrowed from his various reading and conversation) often better put, and better expressed than in the originals. I rejoice when I see Machiavel defended or illustrated, who to me appears one of the wisest men that any nation in any age has produced. Most of the other discourses, military or political, are well worth reading, though that on Kouli Khan was a mere *jeu d'esprit*, a sort of historical exercise. The letters from Russia I had read before with pleasure, particularly the narrative of Munich's and Lascy's campaigns. The detached thoughts are often new and just; but there should have been a revisal of them, as they are frequently to

be found in his letters repeated in the very same words. Some too of the familiar letters might have been spared. The verses are not equal to the prose, but they are above mediocrity.

CXXXIV.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Pembroke-Hall, Feb. 1, 1768.

I AM almost sorry to have raised any degree of impatience in you, because I can by no means satisfy it. The sole reason I have to publish these few additions now, is to make up (in both) for the omission of that *Long Story*; and as to the notes, I do it out of spite, because the public did not understand the two odes (which I have called Pindaric); though the first was not very dark, and the second alluded to a few common facts to be found in any sixpenny history of England, by way of question and answer, for the use of children. The parallel passages I insert out of justice to those writers from whom I happened to take the hint of any line, as far as I can recollect.

I rejoice to be in the hands of Mr. Foulis, who has the laudable ambition of surpassing his predecessors, the *Etiennes* and the *Elsevirs*, as well in literature, as in the proper art of his profession: he surprises me in mentioning a lady, after whom I have been inquiring these fourteen years in vain. When the two odes were first published, I sent them to her; but as I was forced to direct them very much at random, probably they never came to her hands. When the present edition comes out, I beg of Mr. Foulis to offer her a copy in my name, with my respects and grateful remembrances; he will send another to you, sir, and a third to lord Gray, if he will do me the honour of accepting it. These are all the presents I pretend to make (for I would have it considered only as a new edition of an old book); after this, if he pleases to send me one or two, I shall think myself obliged to him. I cannot advise him to print a great number; especially as Dodsley has it in his power to print as many as he pleases, though I desire him not to do so.

You are very good to me in taking this trouble upon you: all I can say is, that I shall be happy to return it in kind, whenever you will give me the opportunity.

CXXXV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Feb. 14, 1768, Pembroke College.

I RECEIVED the book* you were so good to send me, and have read it again (indeed I could hardly be said to have read it before) with attention and with pleasure. Your second edition is so rapid in its progress, that it will now hardly answer any purpose to tell you either my own objections, or those of other people. Certain it is, that you are universally read here; but what *we* think, is not so easy to come at. We stay as usual to see the success, to learn the judgment of the town, to be directed in our opinions by those of more competent judges. If they like you, we shall; if any one of name write against you, we give you up: for we are modest and diffident of ourselves, and not without reason. History in particular is not our *forte*; for (the truth is) we read only modern books and the pamphlets of the day. I have heard it objected, that you raise doubts and difficulties, and do not satisfy

* The Historic Doubts.

them by telling us what was *really* the case. I have heard you charged with disrespect to the king of Prussia; and above all to king William, and the revolution. These are seriously the most sensible things I have heard said, and all that I can recollect. If you please to justify yourself, you may.

My own objections are little more essential: they relate chiefly to inaccuracies of style, which either debase the expression or obscure the meaning. I could point out several small particulars of this kind, and will do so, if you think it can serve any purpose after publication. When I hear you read, they often escape me, partly because I am attending to the subject, and partly because from habit I understand you, where a stranger might often be at a loss.

As to your arguments, most of the principal points are made out with a clearness and evidence that no one would expect where materials are so scarce. Yet I still suspect Richard of the murder of Henry VI. The chronicler of Croyland charges it full on him, though without a name or any mention of circumstances. The interests of Edward were the interests of Richard too, though the throne were not then in view; and that Henry still stood in

his best friend, and almost all the southern and western counties on one day in arms against him; that, having seen all these insurrections come to nothing, he should march with a gallant army against a handful of needy adventurers, led by a fugitive, who had not the shadow of a title, nor any virtues to recommend him, nor any foreign strength to depend on; that he should be betrayed by almost all his troops, and fall a sacrifice;—all this is to me utterly improbable, and I do not ever expect to see it accounted for.

I take this opportunity to tell you, that Algarotti (as I see in the new edition of his works printed at Leghorn), being employed to buy pictures for the king of Poland, purchased among others the famous Holbein, that was at Venice. It don't appear that he knew any thing of your book: yet he calls it the *consul Meyer and his family*, as if it were then known to be so in that city.

A young man here, who is a diligent reader of your books, an antiquary, and a painter, informs me, that at the Red-lion inn, at Newmarket, is a piece of tapestry, containing the very design of your marriage of Henry the Sixth, only with several more

figures in it, both men and women; that he would have bought it of the people, but they refused to part with it.

Mr. Mason, who is here, desires to present his respects to you. He says, that to efface from our annals the history of any tyrant is to do an essential injury to mankind: but he forgives it, because you have shown Henry the Seventh to be a greater devil than Richard.

Pray do not be out of humour. When you first commenced an author, you exposed yourself to pit, box, and gallery. Any coxcomb in the world may come in and hiss, if he pleases; ay, and (what is almost as bad) clap too, and you cannot hinder him. I saw a little squib fired at you in a newspaper by some of the *house of York*, for speaking lightly of chancellors. Adieu!

CXXXVI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Pembroke College, Feb. 25, 1768.

To your friendly accusation, I am glad I can plead not guilty with a safe conscience. Dodsley told me in the spring that the plates

from Mr. Bentley's designs were worn out, and he wanted to have them copied and reduced to a smaller scale for a new edition. I dissuaded him from so silly an expense, and desired he would put in no ornaments at all. The *Long Story* was to be totally omitted, as its only use (that of explaining the prints) was gone: but to supply the place of it in bulk, lest *my works* should be mistaken for ~~the~~ works of a flea, or a pismire, I promised to send him an equal weight of poetry or prose: so, since my return hither, I put up about two ounces of stuff; viz. The Fatal Sisters, The Descent of Odin (of both which you have copies), a bit of something from the Welsh, and certain little notes, partly from justice (to acknowledge the debt, where I had borrowed any thing), partly from ill temper, just to tell the gentle reader, that Edward I. was not Oliver Cromwell, nor queen Elizabeth the witch of Endor. This is literally all; and with all this I shall be but a shrimp of an author. I gave leave also to print the same thing at Glasgow; but I doubt my packet has miscarried, for I hear nothing of its arrival as yet. To what you say to me so civilly, that I ought to write more, I reply in your own words (like the pamphleteer, who is going to con-

fute you out of your own mouth), What has one to do, when *turned of fifty*, but really to think of finishing? However, I will be candid (for you seem to be so with me), and avow to you, that till fourscore and ten, whenever the humour takes me, I will write, because I like it; and because I like myself better when I do so. If I do not write much, it is because I cannot. As you have not this last plea, I see no reason why you should not continue as long as it is agreeable to yourself, and to all such as have any curiosity or judgment in the subjects you choose to treat. By the way; let me tell you (while it is fresh) that lord Sandwich, who was lately dining at Cambridge, speaking (as I am told) handsomely of your book, said, it was pity you did not know that his cousin Manchester had a genealogy of the kings, which came down no lower than to Richard III. and at the end of it were two portraits of Richard and his son, in which that king appeared to be a handsome man. I tell you it as I heard it; perhaps you may think it worth inquiring into.

I have looked into Speed and Leslie. It appears very odd that Speed, in the speech he makes for P. Warbeck, addressed to James IV. of Scotland, should three times

cite the *manuscript proclamation* of Perkin, then in the hands of sir Robert Cotton; and yet when he gives us the proclamation afterwards (on occasion of the insurrection in Cornwall) he does not cite any such manuscript. In Casley's Catalogue of the Cotton Library you may see whether this manuscript proclamation still exists or not: if it does, it may be found at the Museum. Leslie will give you no satisfaction at all: though no subject of England, he could not write freely on this matter, as the title of Mary his mistress to the crown of England was derived from that of Henry VII. Accordingly, he every where treats Perkin as an impostor; yet drops several little expressions inconsistent with that supposition. He has preserved no proclamation: he only puts a short speech into Perkin's mouth, the substance of which is taken by Speed, and translated in the end of his, which is a good deal longer: the whole matter is treated by Leslie very concisely and superficially. I can easily transcribe it, if you please; but I do not see that it could answer any purpose.

Mr. Boswell's book I was going to recommend to you, when I received your letter: it has pleased and moved me strangely, all (I mean) that relates to Paoli. He

is a man born two thousand years after his time! The pamphlet proves what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell's truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of this kind. The true title of this part of his work is, A Dialogue between a Green-goose and a Hero.

I had been told of a manuscript in Bene't library: the inscription of it is *Itinerarium Fratris Simonis Simeonis et Hugonis Illuminatoris*, 1322. Would not one think this should promise something? They were two Franciscan friars that came from Ireland, and passed through Wales to London, to Canterbury, to Dover, and so to France, in their way to Jerusalem. All that relates to our own country has been transcribed for me, and (sorry am I to say) signifies not a half-penny: only this little bit might be inserted in your next edition of the Painters: *Ad aliud caput civitatis (Londoniæ) est monasterium nigrorum monachorum nomine Westminster-monasterium, in quo constanter et communiter omnes reges Angliæ sepeliuntur—et eidem monasterio quasi immediate conjungitur illud famosissimum palatium regis, in*

quo est illa vulgata camera, in cujus parietibus sunt omnes historiæ bellicæ totius Bibliæ ineffabiliter depictæ, atque in Gallico completissime et perfectissime conscriptæ, in non modicâ intuituum admiratione et maximâ regali magnificentiâ.

I have had certain observations on your Royal and Noble Authors given me to send you perhaps about three years ago: last week I found them in a drawer, and (my conscience being troubled) now enclose them to you. I have even forgot whose they are.

I have been also told of a passage in Ph. de Comines, which (if you know) ought not to have been passed over. The book is not at hand at present, and I must conclude my letter. Adieu!

CXXXVII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Pembroke-College, March 6, 1768.

HERE is sir William Cornwallis, entitled *Essayes of certaine Paradoxes*. 2d Edit. 1617, Lond.

King Richard III.

The French Pockes

Nothing

Good to be in debt

Sadnesse

Julian the Apostate's vertues

} praised.

The title-page will probably suffice you; but if you would know any more of him, he has read nothing but the common chronicles, and those without attention: for example, speaking of Anne the queen, he says, she was *barren*, of which Richard had often complained to Rotheram. He extenuates the murder of Henry VI. and his son: the first, he says, might be a malicious accusation, for that many did suppose he died of mere melancholy and grief: the latter cannot be proved to be the action of Richard (though executed in his presence); and if it were, he did it out of love to his brother Edward. He justifies the death of the lords at Pomfret, from reasons of state, for his own preservation, the safety of the commonwealth, and the ancient nobility. The execution of Hastings he excuses from necessity, from the dishonesty and sensuality of the man: what was his crime with respect to Richard, he does not say. Dr. Shaw's sermon was not by the king's command, but to be impat-

ed to the preacher's own ambition: but if it was by order, *to charge his mother with adultery was a matter of no such great moment, since it is no wonder in that sex.* Of the murder in the Tower he doubts; but if it were by his order, the offence was to God, not to his people; and *how could he demonstrate his love more amply, than to venture his soul for their quiet?* Have you enough, pray? You see it is an idle declamation, the exercise of a school-boy that is to be bred a statesman.

I have looked in Stowe: to be sure there is no proclamation there. Mr. Hume, I suppose, means *Speed*, where it is given, how truly I know not; but that he had seen the original is sure, and seems to quote the very words of it in the beginning of that speech which Perkin makes to James IV. and also just afterwards, where he treats of the Cornish rebellion.

Guthrie, you see, has vented himself in the Critical Review. His History I never saw, nor is it here, nor do I know any one that ever saw it. He is a rascal, but rascals may chance to meet with curious records; and that commission to sir J. Tyrell (if it be not a lie) is such: so is the order for Henry the Sixth's funeral. I would by no

means take notice of him, write what he would. I am glad you have seen the Manchester-roll.

It is not I that talk of Phil. de Comines; it was mentioned to me as a thing that looked like a voluntary omission: but I see you have taken notice of it in the note to page 71, though rather too slightly. You have not observed that the same writer says, c. 55, *Richard tua de sa main, ou fit tuer en sa presence, quelque lieu apart, ce bon homme le roi Henry*. Another oversight I think there is at p. 43, where you speak of the *roll of parliament* and the contract with lady Eleanor Boteler, as things newly come to light; whereas Speed has given at large the same roll in his History. Adieu!

CXXXVIII.

TO THE DUKE OF GRAFTON.

Cambridge, July, 1768.

MY LORD,
YOUR grace has dealt nobly with me; and the same delicacy of mind that induced you to confer this favour on me, unsolicited and unexpected, may perhaps make you averse

to receive my sincerest thanks and grateful acknowledgments. Yet your grace must excuse me, they will have their way: they are indeed but words; yet I know and feel they come from my heart, and therefore are not wholly unworthy of your grace's acceptance. I even flatter myself (such is my pride) that you have some little satisfaction in your own work. If I did not deceive myself in this, it would complete the happiness of,

My lord, your grace's

Most obliged and devoted servant.

CXXXIX.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.*

Jermyn-street, Aug. 3, 1768.

THAT Mr. Bocket has broken his neck by a fall from his horse, you will have seen in the newspapers; and also that I, your humble servant, have kissed the king's hand for his succession; they are both true, but the manner how you know not; only I can as-

* Rector of Louth and Bradwell, in Suffolk. His acquaintance with Mr. Gray commenced a few years before the date of this, when he was a student of Trinity-Hall, Cambridge.

sure you that I had no hand at all in his fall, and almost as little in the second event. He died on the Sunday; on Wednesday following his grace the duke of Grafton wrote me a very polite letter, to say that his majesty had commanded him to offer me the vacant professorship, not only as a reward of, &c. but as a credit to, &c. with much more too high for me to transcribe. So on Thursday the king signed the warrant, and next day, at his levee, I kissed his hand; he made me several gracious speeches, which I shall not repeat, because every body, that goes to court, does so: besides, the day was so hot, and the ceremony so embarrassing to me, that I hardly knew what he said.

Adieu. I am to perish here with heat this fortnight yet, and then to Cambridge; to be sure my dignity is a little the worse for wear, but mended and washed, it will do for me.

CXL.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Fembroke-Hall, Oct. 31, 1768.

It is some time since I received from Mr. Foulis two copies of my poems, one by the

hands of Mr. T. Pitt, the other by Mr. Merrill, a bookseller of this town: it is indeed a most beautiful edition, and must certainly do credit both to him and to me: but I fear it will be of no other advantage to him, as Dodsley has contrived to glut the town already with two editions beforehand, one of 1500, and the other of 750, both indeed far inferior to that of Glasgow, but sold at half the price. I must repeat my thanks, sir, for the trouble you have been pleased to give yourself on my account; and through you I must desire leave to convey my acknowledgments to Mr. Foulis, for the pains and expense he has been at in this publication.

We live at so great a distance, that, perhaps, you may not yet have learned, what, I flatter myself, you will not be displeased to hear: the middle of last summer his majesty was pleased to appoint me Regius Professor of Modern History in this university; it is the best thing the crown has to bestow (on a layman) here; the salary is 400*l.* per annum, but what enhances the value of it to me is, that it was bestowed without being asked. The person who held it before me, died on the Sunday; and on Wednesday following the duke of Grafton wrote me a let-

ter to say, that the king offered me this office, with many additional expressions of kindness on his grace's part, to whom I am but little known, and whom I have not seen either before or since he did me this favour. Instances of a benefit so nobly conferred, I believe, are rare; and therefore I tell you of it as a thing that does honour, not only to me, but to the minister.

As I lived here before from choice, I shall now continue to do so from obligation: if business or curiosity should call you southwards, you will find few friends that will see you with more cordial satisfaction, than, dear sir, &c.

CXLI.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.

I WAS absent from college, and did not receive your melancholy letter till my return hither yesterday; so you must not attribute this delay to me but to accident; to sympathize with you in such a loss* is an easy task

* The death of his uncle, governor Floyer.

for me, but to comfort you not so easy; can I wish to see you unaffected with the sad scene now before your eyes, or with the loss of a person that, through a great part of your life, has proved himself so kind a friend to you? He who best knows our nature (for he made us what we are) by such afflictions recalls us from our wandering thoughts and idle merriment; from the insolence of youth and prosperity, to serious reflection, to our duty, and to himself; nor need we hasten to get rid of these impressions; time (by appointment of the same Power) will cure the smart, and in some hearts soon blot out all the traces of sorrow: but such as preserve them longest (for it is partly left in our own power) do perhaps best acquiesce in the will of the Chastiser.

For the consequences of this sudden loss, I see them well, and I think, in a like situation, could fortify my mind, so as to support them with cheerfulness and good hopes, though not naturally inclined to see things in their best aspect. When you have time to turn yourself round, you must think seriously of your profession; you know I would have wished to see you wear the livery of it long ago: but I will

not dwell on this subject at present. To be obliged to those we love and esteem is a pleasure; but to serve and oblige them is a still greater; and this, with independence (no vulgar blessing) are what a profession at your age may reasonably promise: without it they are hardly attainable. Remember I speak from experience.

In the mean time, while your present situation lasts, which I hope will not be long, continue your kindness and confidence in me, by trusting me with the whole of it; and surely you hazard nothing by so doing: that situation does not appear so new to me as it does to you. You well know the tenour of my conversation (urged at times perhaps a little farther than you liked) has been intended to prepare you for this event, and to familiarize your mind with this spectre, which you call by its worst name: but remember that "*Honesta res est læta paupertas.*" I see it with respect, and so will every one, whose poverty is not seated in their mind.* There is but one real evil in it (take my word who know it well) and that is, that you have less the power of assisting others,

* An excellent thought finely expressed.

who have not the same resources to support them. You have youth: you have many kind well-intentioned people belonging to you; many acquaintance of your own, or families that will wish to serve you. Consider how many have had the same, or greater cause for dejection, with none of these resources before their eyes. Adieu! I sincerely wish you happiness.

P.S. I have just heard that a friend of mine is struck with a paralytic disorder, in which state it is likely he may live incapable of assisting himself, in the hands of servants or relations that only gape after his spoils, perhaps for years to come: think how many things may befall a man far worse than poverty or death.

CXLII.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.

Pembroke College, June 24, 1769.

AND so you have a garden of your own,* and you plant and transplant, and are dirty

* Mr. Nicholls, by having pursued the advice of his correspondent, we find was now possessed of that competency which he

and amused! Are not you ashamed of yourself? Why, I have no such thing, you monster, nor ever shall be either dirty or amused as long as I live. My gardens are in the windows like those of a lodger up three pair of stairs in Petticoat-Lane, or Camomile-Street, and they go to bed regularly under the same roof that I do. Dear, how charming it must be to walk out in one's own *garding*, and sit on a bench in the open air, with a fountain and leaden statue, and a rolling stone, and an arbour: have a care of soar-throats though, and the *agoe*.

However, be it known to you, though I have no garden, I have sold my estate and got a thousand guineas,* and fourscore pounds a year for my old aunt, and a twenty pound prize in the lottery, and Lord knows what arrears in the treasury, and am a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns,

wished him. Happy, not only in having so sage an adviser, but in his own good sense which prompted him to follow such advice. The gayety, whim, and humour of this letter contrast prettily with the gravity and serious reflection of the former.

* Consisting of houses on the west side of Hand-Alley, London: Mrs. Oliffe was the aunt here mentioned, who had a share in this estate, and for whom he procured this annuity. She died in 1771, a few months before her nephew.

and every thing handsome about him, and in a few days shall have new window curtains: are you advised of that? Ay, and a new mattress to lie upon.

My ode has been rehearsed again and again,* and the scholars have got scraps by heart: I expect to see it torn piece-meal in the North-Briton before it is born.—If you will come you shall see it, and sing in it amidst a chorus from Salisbury and Gloucester music meeting, great names there, and all well versed in Judas Maccabæus. I wish it were once over; for then I immediately go for a few days to London, and so with Mr. Brown to Aston, though I fear it will rain the whole summer, and Skiddaw will be invisible and inaccessible to mortals.

I have got De la Lande's Voyage through Italy, in eight volumes; he is a member of the academy of sciences, and pretty good to read. I have read too an octavo volume of Shenstone's Letters: poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned; but which he only enjoyed when people of

† Ode for Music on the duke of Grafton's installation. See Poems. His reason for writing it is given in the next letter.

note came to see and commend it: his correspondence is about nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neighbouring clergymen who wrote verses too.

I have just found the beginning of a letter, which somebody had dropped: I should rather call it first-thoughts for the beginning of a letter; for there are many scratches and corrections. As I cannot use it myself, (having got a beginning already of my own) I send it for your use on some great occasion.

Dear Sir,

“After so long silence, the hopes of pardon, and prospect of forgiveness might seem entirely extinct, or at least very remote, was I not truly sensible of your goodness and candour, which is the only asylum that my negligence can fly to, since every apology would prove insufficient to counterbalance it, or alleviate my fault: how then shall my deficiency presume to make so bold an attempt, or be able to suffer the hardships of so rough a campaign?” &c. &c. &c.

CXLIII.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

Cambridge, July 16, 1769.

THE late ceremony of the duke of Grafton's installation has hindered me from acknowledging sooner the satisfaction your friendly compliment gave me: I thought myself bound in gratitude to his grace, unasked, to take upon me the task of writing those verses which are usually set to music on this occasion.* I do not think them worth sending you, because they are by nature doomed to live but a single day; or, if their existence is prolonged beyond that date, it is only by means of newspaper parodies, and witless criticisms. This sort of abuse I had reason to expect, but did not think it worth while to avoid.

* In a short note which he wrote to Mr. Stonhewer, June 12, when, at his request, he sent him the ode in manuscript for his grace's perusal, he expresses this motive more fully. "I did not intend the duke should have heard me till he could not help it. You are desired to make the best excuses you can to his grace for the liberty I have taken of praising him to his face; but as somebody was necessarily to do this, I did not see why gratitude should sit silent and leave it to Expectation to sing, who certainly would have sung, and that a *gorge deployee* upon such an occasion."

Mr. Foulis is magnificent in his gratitude.* I cannot figure to myself how it can be worth his while to offer me such a present. You can judge better of it than I; and if he does not hurt himself by it, I would accept his Homer with many thanks. I have not got or even seen it.

I could wish to subscribe to his new edition of Milton, and desire to be set down for two copies of the large paper; but you must inform me where and when I may pay the money.

You have taught me to long for a second letter, and particularly for what you say will make the contents of it.† I have nothing to requite it with but plain and friendly truth, and that you shall have, joined to a zeal for your fame, and a pleasure in your success.

I am now setting forward on a journey towards the north of England; but it will not reach so far as I could wish. I must return hither before Michaelmas, and shall barely

* When the Glasgow edition of Mr. Gray's poems was sold off (which it was in a short time) Mr. Foulis, finding himself a considerable gainer, mentioned to Mr. Beattie, that he wished to make Mr. Gray a present either of his Homer, in 4 vols. folio, or the Greek historians, printed likewise at his press, in 9 vols. duodecimo.

† His correspondent had intimated to him his intention of sending him his first book of the Minstrel.

have time to visit a few places, and a few friends.

CXLIV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Aston, Oct. 18, 1769.

I HOPE you got safe and well home after that troublesome night.* I long to hear you say so. For me, I have continued well, been so

* Dr. Wharton, who had intended to accompany Mr. Gray to Keswick, was seized at Brough with a violent fit of his asthma, which obliged him to return home. This was the reason that Mr. Gray undertook to write the following journal of his tour for his friend's amusement. He sent it under different covers. I give it here in continuation. It may not be amiss, however, to hint to the reader, that if he expects to find elaborate and nicely-turned periods in this narration, he will be greatly disappointed. When Mr. Gray described places, he aimed only to be exact, clear, and intelligible; to convey peculiar, not general ideas, and to paint by the eye, not the fancy. There have been many accounts of the Westmoreland and Cumberland lakes, both before and since this was written, and all of them better calculated to please readers who are fond of what they call *fine writing*: yet those, who can content themselves with an elegant simplicity of narrative, will, I flatter myself, find this to their taste; they will perceive it was written with a view rather to inform than surprise; and, if they make it their companion when they take the same tour, it will enhance their opinion of its intrinsic excellence; in this way I tried it myself before I resolved to print it.

favoured by the weather, ~~that~~ my walks have never once been hindered till yesterday) that is a fortnight and three or four days, and a journey of more than 300 miles). I am now at Aston for two days. To-morrow I go to Cambridge. Mason is not here, but Mr. Alderson receives me. According to my promise, I send you the first sheet of my journal, to be continued without end.

Sept. 30. A mile and a half from Brough, where we parted, on a hill, lay a great army* encamped: to the left opened a fine valley with green meadows and hedge-rows, a gentleman's house peeping forth from a grove of old trees. On a nearer approach appeared myriads of cattle and horses in the road itself, and in all the fields round me, a brisk stream hurrying cross the way, thousands of clean healthy people in their best party-coloured apparel: farmers and their families, esquires and their daughters, hastening up from the dales and down the fells from every quarter, glittering in the sun, and pressing forward to join the throng; while the dark hills, on whose tops the mists were yet hanging, served as a contrast to this gay and moving

* There is a great fair for cattle kept on the hill near Brough on this day and the preceding.

scene, which continued for near two miles more along the road, and the crowd (coming towards it) reached on as far as Appleby. On the ascent of the hill above Appleby the thick hanging wood, and the long reaches of the Eden, clear, rapid, and as full as ever, winding below, with views of the castle and town, gave much employment to the mirror:* but now the sun was wanting, and the sky overcast. Oats and barley cut every where, but not carried in. Passed Kirbythore, sir William Dalston's house at Acorn-Bank, Whinfield Park, Harthorn Oaks, Countess-Pillar, Brougham Castle, Mr. Brown's large new house ; crossed the Eden and the Eimot (pronounce Eeman) with its green vale, and dined at three o'clock with Mrs. Buchanan at Penrith, on trout and partridge. In the afternoon walked up Beacon-hill, a mile to the top, and could see Ulswater through an opening in the bosom of that cluster of broken mountains, which the doctor well remembers, Whinfield and Lowther

* Mr. Gray carried usually with him on these tours a plane convex mirror of about four inches diameter on a black foil, and bound up like a pocket-book. A glass of this sort is perhaps the best and most convenient substitute for a camera obscura, of any thing that has hitherto been invented, and may be had of any optician.

parks, &c. and the craggy tops of an hundred nameless hills: these lie to west and south. To the north, a great extent of black and dreary plains. To the east, Cross-fell, just visible through mists and vapours hovering round it.

Oct. 1. A gray autumnal day, the air perfectly calm and mild; went to see Ulswater, five miles distant; soon left the Keswick-road, and turned to the left, through shady lanes, along the vale of Eeman, which runs rapidly on near the way, rippling over the stones; to the right is Delmaine, a large fabric of pale red stone, with nine windows in front and seven on the side, built by Mr. Hassle; behind it a fine lawn surrounded by woods, and a long rocky eminence rising over them: a clear and brisk rivulet runs by the house to join the Eeman, whose course is in sight and at a small distance. Farther on appears Hatton St. John, a castle-like old mansion of Mr. Huddleston. Approached Dunmallert, a fine pointed hill covered with wood, planted by old Mr. Hassle before-mentioned, who lives always at home, and delights in planting. Walked over a spongy meadow or two, and began to mount the hill through a broad straight green alley among the trees, and with some toil

gained the summit. From hence saw the lake opening directly at my feet, majestic in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores and low points of land covered with green enclosures, white farm-houses looking out among the trees, and cattle feeding. The water is almost every where bordered with cultivated lands, gently sloping upwards from a mile to a quarter of a mile in breadth, till they reach the feet of the mountains, which rise very rude and awful with their broken tops on either hand. Directly in front, at better than three miles distance, Place-Fell, one of the bravest among them, pushes its bold broad breast into the midst of the lake, and forces it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right. I descended Dunmallert again by a side avenue, that was only not perpendicular, and came to Bartonbridge over the Eeman, then walking through a path in the wood round the bottom of the hill, came forth where the Eeman issues out of the lake, and continued my way along its western shore close to the water, and generally on a level with it. Saw a cormorant flying over it and fishing. The figure of the lake nothing resembles that laid down in our

maps: it is nine miles long, and at widest under a mile in breadth. After extending itself three miles and a half in a line to the south-west, it turns at the foot of Place-Fell almost due west, and is here not twice the breadth of the Thames at London. It is soon again interrupted by the root of Helvellyn, a lofty and very rugged mountain; and spreading again, turns off to south-east, and is lost among the deep recesses of the hills. To this second turning I pursued my way about four miles along its borders beyond a village scattered among trees, and called Water-Mallock, in a pleasant grave day, perfectly calm and warm, but without a gleam of sunshine; then the sky seeming to thicken, and the valley to grow more desolate, and evening drawing on, I returned by the way I came to Penrith.

Oct. 2. I set out at ten for Keswick, by the road we went in 1767; saw Greystock town and castle to the right, which lie about three miles from Ulswater over the fells; passed through Penradox and Threlcot at the foot of Saddleback, whose furrowed sides were gilt by the noonday sun, whilst its brow appeared of a sad purple from the shadow of the clouds as they sailed slowly by it. The broad and green valley of Gar-

dies and Lowside, with a swift stream glittering among the cottages and meadows, lay to the left, and the much finer but narrower valley of St. John's opening into it: Hilltop, the large though low mansion of the Gas-karths, now a farm-house, seated on an eminence among woods, under a steep fell, was what appeared the most conspicuous, and beside it a great rock, like some ancient tower nodding to its fall. Passed by the side of Skiddaw and its cub called Latter-rig; and saw from an eminence, at two miles distance, the vale of Elysium in all its verdure; the sun then playing on the bosom of the lake, and lighting up all the mountains with its lustre. Dined by two o'clock at the Queen's Head, and then straggled out alone to the Parsonage, where I saw the sun set in all its glory.

Oct. 3. A heavenly day; rose at seven and walked out under the conduct of my landlord to Borrowdale; the grass was covered with a hoar-frost, which soon melted and exhaled in a thin blueish smoke; crossed the meadows, obliquely catching a diversity of views among the hills over the lake and islands, and changing prospect at every ten paces. Left Cockshut (which we formerly mounted) and Castle-hill, a loftier and more

rugged hill behind me, and drew near the foot of Wallacrag, whose bare and rocky brow cut perpendicularly down above 400 feet (as I guess, though the people call it much more) awfully overlooks the way. Our path here tends to the left, and the ground gently rising and covered with a glade of scattering trees and bushes on the very margin of the water, opens both ways the most delicious view that my eyes ever beheld; opposite are the thick woods of lord Egremont and Newland-valley, with green and smiling fields embosomed in the dark cliffs; to the left the jaws of Borrowdale, with that turbulent chaos of mountain behind mountain, rolled in confusion; beneath you, and stretching far away to the right, the shining purity of the lake reflecting rocks, woods, fields, and inverted tops of hills, just ruffled by the breeze, enough to show it is alive, with the white buildings of Keswick, Crosthwaite church, and Skiddaw for a back ground at a distance. Behind you the magnificent heights of Walla-crag: here the glass played its part divinely; the place is called Carfclose-reeds; and I chose to set down these barbarous names, that any body may inquire on the place, and easily find the particular station that I mean. This

scene continues to Barrow-gate, and a little farther, passing a brook called Barrow-beck; we entered Borrowdale: the crags named Lawdoor banks begin now to impend terribly over your way, and more terribly when you hear that three years since an immense mass of rock tumbled at once from the brow, and barred all access to the dale (for this is the only road) till they could work their way through it. Luckily no one was passing at the time of this fall; but down the side of the mountain, and far into the lake, lie dispersed the huge fragments of this ruin in all shapes and in all directions: something farther we turned aside into a coppice, ascending a little in front of Lawdoor water-fall; the height appeared to be about 200 feet, the quantity of water not great, though (these three days excepted) it had rained daily in the hills for near two months before: but then the stream was nobly broken, leaping from rock to rock, and foaming with fury. On one side a towering crag that spired up to equal, if not overtop, the neighbouring cliffs (this lay all in shade and darkness): on the other hand a rounder broader projecting hill shagged with wood, and illuminated by the sun, which glanced sideways on the upper part of the cataract. The force of the

water wearing a deep channel in the ground, hurries away to join the lake. We descended again, and passed the stream over a rude bridge. Soon after we came under Gowdarcrag, a hill more formidable to the eye, and to the apprehension, than that of Lawdoor; the rocks at top, deep-cloven perpendicularly by the rains, hanging loose and nodding forwards, seem just starting from their base in shivers. The whole way down, and the road on both sides is strewn with piles of the fragments strangely thrown across each other, and of a dreadful bulk; the place reminds me of those passes in the Alps, where the guides tell you to move on with speed, and say nothing, lest the agitation of the air should loosen the snows above, and bring down a mass that would overwhelm a caravan. I took their counsel here, and hastened on in silence.

Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa !

The hills here are clothed all up their steep sides with oak, ash, birch, holly, &c. : some of it has been cut forty years ago, some within these eight years; yet all is sprung again, green, flourishing, and tall, for its age, in a place where no soil appears but

the staring rock, and where a man could scarce stand upright: here we met a civil young farmer overseeing his reapers (for it is now oat-harvest) who conducted us to a neat white house in the village of Grange, which is built on a rising ground in the midst of a valley; round it the mountains form an awful amphitheatre, and through it obliquely runs the Derwent clear as glass, and showing under its bridge every trout that passes. Beside the village rises a round eminence of rock covered entirely with old trees, and over that more proudly towers Castle-crag, invested also with wood on its sides, and bearing on its naked top some traces of a fort said to be Roman. By the side of this hill, which almost blocks up the way, the valley turns to the left, and contracts its dimensions till there is hardly any road but the rocky bed of the river. The wood of the mountains increases, and their summits grow loftier to the eye, and of more fantastic forms; among them appear Eagle's-cliff, Dove's-nest, Whitedale-pike, &c. celebrated names in the annals of Keswick. The dale opens about four miles higher till you come to Seawhaite (where lies the way, mounting the hills to the right, that leads to the Wadd-mines); all farther access is here barred to

prying mortals, only there is a little path winding over the fells, and for some weeks in the year passable to the dalesmen; but the mountains know well that these innocent people will not reveal the mysteries of their ancient kingdom, "the reign of Chaos and Old Night:" only I learned that this dreadful road, dividing again, leads one branch to Ravenglas, and the other to Hawkshead.

For me, I went no farther than the farmer's (better than four miles from Keswick) at Grange; his mother and he brought us butter that Siserah would have jumped at, though not in a lordly dish, bowls of milk, thin oaten-cakes and ale; and we had carried a cold tongue thither with us. Our farmer was himself the man that last year plundered the eagle's eyrie; all the dale are up in arms on such an occasion, for they lose abundance of lambs yearly, not to mention hares, partridges, grouse, &c. He was let down from the cliff in ropes to the shelf of the rock on which the nest was built, the people above shouting and hollowing to fright the old birds, which flew screaming round, but did not dare to attack him. He brought off the eaglet (for there is rarely more than one) and an addle egg. The nest was roundish, and more than a yard over, made

of twigs twisted together. Seldom a year passes but they take the brood or eggs, and sometimes they shoot one, sometimes the other parent; but the survivor has always found a mate (probably in Ireland) and they breed near the old place. By his description, I learn that this species is the *Erne*, the vulture *Albicilla* of Linnæus, in his last edition, (but in yours *Falco Albicilla*) so consult him and Pennant about it.

We returned leisurely home the way we came; but saw a new landscape; the features indeed were the same in part, but many new ones were disclosed by the mid-day sun, and the tints were entirely changed: take notice this was the best, or perhaps the only day for going up Skiddaw, but I thought it better employed; it was perfectly serene, and hot as midsummer.

In the evening I walked alone down to the lake by the side of Crow-park after sunset, and saw the solemn colouring of night draw on, the last gleam of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore. At a distance were heard the murmurs of many

water-falls, not audible in the day-time; I wished for the moon, but she was *dark to me and silent*.

Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Oct. 4. I walked to Crow-park, now a rough pasture, once a glade of ancient oaks, whose large roots still remain on the ground, but nothing has sprung from them. If one single tree had remained, this would have been an unparalleled spot; and Smith judged right, when he took his print of the lake from hence, for it is a gentle eminence, not too high, on the very margin of the water, and commanding it from end to end, looking full into the gorge of Borrowdale. I prefer it even to Cockshut-hill, which lies beside it, and to which I walked in the afternoon; it is covered with young trees both sown and planted, oak, spruce, Scotch-fir, &c. all which thrive wonderfully. There is an easy ascent to the top, and the view far preferable to that on Castle-hill (which you remember) because this is lower and nearer to the lake: for I find all points, that are much elevated, spoil the beauty of the valley, and make its parts, which are not large, look poor and diminu-

tive.* While I was here a little shower fell, red clouds came marching up the hills from the east, and part of a bright rainbow seemed to rise along the side of Castle-hill.

From hence I got to the Parsonage a little before sun-set, and saw in my glass a picture, that if I could transmit to you, and fix it in all the softness of its living colours, would fairly sell for a thousand pounds. This is the sweetest scene I can yet discover in point of pastoral beauty; the rest are in a sublimer style.

Oct. 5. I walked through the meadows and corn-fields to the Derwent, and crossing it went up How-hill; it looks along Basingthwaite-water, and sees at the same time

* The *picturesque point* is always thus low in all prospects; a truth, which though the landscape painter knows, he cannot always observe; since the patron who employs him to take a view of his place, usually carries him to some elevation for that purpose, in order, I suppose, that he may have more of him for his money. Yet when I say this, I would not be thought to mean that a drawing should be made from the lowest point possible; as for instance, in this very view, from the lake itself, for then a fore-ground would be wanting. On this account, when I sailed on Derwent-water, I did not receive so much pleasure from the superb amphitheatre of mountains around me, as when, like Mr. Gray, I traversed its margin; and I therefore think he did not lose much by not taking boat.

the course of the river, and a part of the upper-lake, with a full view of Skiddaw; then I took my way through Portingskall village to the park, a hill so called, covered entirely with wood; it is all a mass of crumbling slate. Passed round its foot between the trees and the edge of the water, and came to a peninsula that juts out into the lake, and looks along it both ways; in front rises Walla-crag and Castle-hill, the town, the road to Penrith, Skiddaw, and Saddle-back. Returning, met a brisk and cold north-eastern blast that ruffled all the surface of the lake, and made it rise in little waves that broke at the foot of the wood. After dinner walked up the Penrith road two miles, or more, and turning into a corn-field to the right, called Castle-rig, saw a Druid-circle of large stones, 108 feet in diameter, the biggest not eight feet high, but most of them still erect; they are fifty in number. The valley of St. John's appeared in sight, and the summits of Catchidecam (called by Camden, Casticand) and Helvellyn, said to be as high as Skiddaw, and to rise from a much higher base.

Oct. 6. Went in a chaise eight miles along the east-side of Bassingthwaite water to Ousebridge (pronounced Ews-bridge); the

road in some part made and very good, the rest slippery and dangerous cart-road, or narrow rugged lanes, but no precipices; it runs directly along the foot of Skiddaw; opposite to Widhopebrows, clothed to the top with wood, a very beautiful view opens down to the lake, which is narrower and longer than that of Keswick, less broken into bays, and without islands.* At the foot of it, a few paces from the brink, gently sloping upwards, stands Armathwaite in a thick grove of Scotch firs, commanding a noble view directly up the lake: at a small distance behind the house is a large extent of wood, and still behind this a ridge of cultivated hills, on which, according to the Keswick proverb, *the sun always shines*. The inhabitants here, on the contrary, call the vale of Derwentwater, *the Devil's Chamber-pot*, and pronounce the name of *Skiddaw-fell*, which terminates here, with a sort of terror and aversion. Armathwaite house is a modern fabric, not large, and built of dark-red stone, belonging to Mr. Spedding, whose grandfather was steward to old sir James

* It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr. Gray omitted to mention the islands on Derwentwater; one of which, I think they call it Vicar's Island, makes a principal object in the scene. See Smith's View of Derwentwater.

Lowther, and bought this estate of the Himmers. The sky was overcast and the wind cool; so, after dining at a public-house, which stands here near the bridge, (that crosses the Derwent just where it issues from the lake) and sauntering a little by the water-side, I came home again. The turnpike is finished from Cockermouth hither, five miles, and is carrying on to Penrith: several little showers to-day. A man came in, who said there was snow on Cross-fell this morning.

Oct. 7. I walked in the morning to Crowpark, and in the evening up Penrith road. The clouds came rolling up the mountains all round very dark, yet the moon shone at intervals. It was too damp to go towards the lake. To-morrow I mean to bid farewell to Keswick.

Botany might be studied here to great advantage at another season, because of the great variety of soils and elevations, all lying within a small compass. I observed nothing but several curious lichens, and plenty of gale or Dutch myrtle perfuming the borders of the lake. This year the Waddmine had been opened, which is done once in five years; it is taken out in lumps sometimes as big as a man's fist, and will undergo

no preparation by fire, not being fusible; when it is pure, soft, black, and close-grained, it is worth sometimes thirty shillings a pound. There are no char ever taken in these lakes, but plenty in Buttermere water, which lies a little way north of Borrowdale, about Martinmas, which are potted here. They sow chiefly oats and bigg here, which are now cutting and still on the ground; the rains have done much hurt: yet observe, the soil is so thin and light, that no day has passed in which I could not walk out with ease, and you know I am no lover of dirt. Fell mutton is now in season for about six weeks; it grows fat on the mountains, and nearly resembles venison. Excellent pike and perch, here called bass; trout is out of season; partridge in great plenty.

Oct. 8. I left Keswick and took the Ambleside road in a gloomy morning; and about two miles from the town mounted an eminence called Castle-rig, and the sun breaking out, discovered the most enchanting view I have yet seen of the whole valley behind me, the two lakes, the river, the mountains, all in their glory; so that I had almost a mind to have gone back again. The road in some few parts is not yet com-

pleted, yet good country road, through sound but narrow and stony lanes, very safe in broad day-light. This is the case about Causeway-foot, and among Naddle-fells to Lancwaite. The vale you go in has little breadth; the mountains are vast and rocky, the fields little and poor, and the inhabitants are now making hay, and see not the sun by two hours in a day so long as at Keswick. Came to the foot of Helvellyn, along which runs an excellent road, looking down from a little height on Lee's water, (called also Thirl-meer, or Wiborn water) and soon descending on its margin. The lake looks black from its depth, and from the gloom of the vast crags that scowl over it, though really clear as glass; it is narrow, and about three miles long, resembling a river in its course; little shining torrents hurry down the rocks to join it, but not a bush to overshadow them, or cover their march; all is rock and loose stones up to the very brow, which lies so near your way, that not above half the height of Helvellyn can be seen.

Next I passed by the little chapel of Wiborn, out of which the Sunday congregation were then issuing; soon after a beck near Dunmeil-raise, when I entered Westmoreland a second time; and now began to

see Holmcrag, distinguished from its rugged neighbours, not so much by its height, as by the strange broken outlines of its top, like some gigantic building demolished, and the stones that composed it flung across each other in wild confusion. Just beyond it opens one of the sweetest landscapes that art ever attempted to imitate. The bosom of the mountains spreading here into a broad basin discovers in the midst Grasmere water; its margin is hollowed into small bays, with bold eminences; some of rock, some of soft turf, that half conceal, and vary the figure of the little lake they command; from the shore, a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village with the parish church rising in the midst of it: hanging enclosures, corn fields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees and hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water: and just opposite to you is a large farmhouse at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn, embosomed in old woods, which climb half-way up the mountain's side, and discover above them a broken line of crags that crown the scene. Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house, or garden walls, break in upon the repose of this little un-

suspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatest most becoming attire.

The road winds here over Grasmere-hill, whose rocks soon conceal the water from your sight; yet it is continued along behind them, and, contracting itself to a river, communicates with Ridale water, another small lake, but of inferior size and beauty; it seems shallow too, for large patches of reeds appear pretty far within it. Into this vale the road descends. On the opposite banks large and ancient woods mount up the hills; and just to the left of our way stands Ridale-hall, the family-seat of sir Michael Fleming, a large old-fashioned fabric, surrounded with wood. Sir Michael is now on his travels, and all this timber, far and wide, belongs to him. Near the house rises a huge crag, called Ridale-head, which is said to command a full view of Wynander-mere, and I doubt it not; for within a mile that great lake is visible, even from the road: as to going up the crag, one might as well go up Skiddaw.

I now reached Ambleside, eighteen miles from Keswick, meaning to lie there; but, on looking into the best bed-chamber, dark and damp as a cellar, grew delicate, gave up Wynander-mere in despair, and resolved !

would go on to Kendal directly, fourteen miles farther.* The road in general fine turnpike, but some parts (about three miles in all) not made, yet without danger.

For this determination I was unexpectedly well rewarded: for the afternoon was fine, and the road, for the space of full five miles, ran along the side of Wynander-mere, with delicious views across it, and almost from one end to the other. It is ten miles in length, and at most a mile over, resem-

* By not staying a little at Ambleside, Mr. Gray lost the sight of two most magnificent cascades; the one not above half a mile behind the inn, the other down Ridale-crag, where sir Michael Fleming is now making a path-way to the top of it. These, when I saw them, were in full torrent, whereas Lawdoor water-fall, which I visited in the evening of the very same day, was almost without a stream. Hence I conclude that this distinguished feature in the vale of Keswick, is, like most northern rivers, only in high beauty during bad weather. But his greatest loss was in not seeing a small water-fall visible only through the window of a ruined summer-house in sir Michael's orchard. Here Nature has performed every thing in little that she usually executes on her largest scale; and on that account, like the miniature painter, seems to have finished every part of it in a studied manner: not a little fragment of rock thrown into the basin, not a single stem of brushwood that starts from its craggy sides but has its picturesque meaning: and the little central stream dashing down a cleft of the darkest-coloured stone, produces an effect of light and shadow beautiful beyond description. This little theatrical scene might be painted as large as the original, on a canvass not bigger than those which are usually dropped in the Opera-house.

bling the course of some vast and magnificent river; but no flat marshy grounds, no osier-beds, or patches of scrubby plantations on its banks: at the head two valleys open among the mountains; one, that by which we came down, the other Langsledale, in which Wry-nose and Hard-knot, two great mountains, rise above the rest: from thence the fells visibly sink, and soften along its sides; sometimes they run into it (but with a gentle declivity) in their own dark and natural complexion: oftener they are green and cultivated, with farms interspersed, and round eminences, on the border covered with trees: towards the south, it seemed to break into larger bays, with several islands and a wider extent of cultivation. The way rises continually, till at a place called Orrest-head, it turns south-east, losing sight of the water.

Passed by Ing's-Chapel and Staveley, but I can say no farther; for the dusk of evening coming on, I entered Kendal almost in the dark, and could distinguish only a shadow of the castle on a hill, and tenter-grounds spread far and wide round the town, which I mistook for houses. My inn promised sadly, having two wooden galleries, like Scotland, in front of it: it was indeed an old

ill-contrived house, but kept by civil sensible people; so I stayed two nights with them, and fared and slept very comfortably.

Oct. 9. The air mild as summer, all corn off the ground, and the sky-larks singing aloud (by the way, I saw not one at Keswick, perhaps because the place abounds in birds of prey). I went up the castle-hill; the town consists chiefly of three nearly parallel streets, almost a mile long; except these, all the other houses seem as if they had been dancing a country-dance, and were out: there they stand back to back, corner to corner, some up hill, some down, without intent or meaning. Along by their side runs a fine brisk stream, over which are three stone bridges; the buildings, (a few comfortable houses excepted) are mean, of stone, and covered with a bad rough cast. Near the end of the town stands a handsome house of colonel Wilson's, and adjoining to it the church, a very large Gothic fabric, with a square tower; it has no particular ornaments but double isles, and at the east-end four chapels or choirs; one of the Parrs, another of the Stricklands; the third is the proper choir of the church, and the fourth of the Bellinghams, a family now extinct. There is an altar-tomb of one of

them dated 1577, with a flat brass, arms and quarterings; and in the window their arms alone, arg. a hunting-horn, sab. strung gules. In the Stricklands' chapel several modern monuments, and another old altar-tomb, not belonging to the family: on the side of it a fess dancetty between ten billets, Deincourt. In the Parrs' chapel is a third altar-tomb in the corner, no figure or inscription, but on the side, cut in stone, an escutcheon of Ross of Kendal, (three water-buckets) quartering Parr (two bars in a bordure engrailed); 2dly, an escutcheon, vair, a fess for Marmion; 3dly, an escutcheon, three chevronels braced, and a chief (which I take for Fitzhugh): at the foot is an escutcheon, surrounded with the garter, bearing Roos and Parr quarterly, quartering the other two before-mentioned. I have no books to look in, therefore cannot say whether this is the Lord Parr of Kendal, queen Catharine's father, or her brother the marquis of Northampton: perhaps it is a cenotaph for the latter, who was buried at Warwick in 1571. The remains of the castle are seated on a fine hill on the side of the river opposite the town; almost the whole enclosure of the walls remains, with four towers, two square and two round, but their upper part and em-

battlements are demolished: it is of rough stone and cement, without any ornament or arms, round, enclosing a court of like form, and surrounded by a moat; nor ever could it have been larger than it is, for there are no traces of outworks. There is a good view of the town and river, with a fertile open valley through which it winds.

After dinner I went along the Milthrop turnpike, four miles, to see the falls, or force, of the river Kent; came to Sizergh, (pronounced Siser) and turned down a lane to the left. This seat of the Stricklands, an old Catholic family, is an ancient hall-house, with a very large tower embattled; the rest of the buildings added to it are of later date, but all is white, and seen to advantage on a back ground of old trees; there is a small park also well wooded. Opposite to this, turning to the left, I soon came to the river; it works its way in a narrow and deep rocky channel overhung with trees. The calmness and brightness of the evening, the roar of the waters, and the thumping of huge hammers at an iron-forge not far distant, made it a singular walk; but as to the falls, (for there are two) they are not four feet high. I went on, down to the forge, and saw the demons at work by the light of their

own fires: the iron is brought in pigs to Milthrop by sea from Scotland, &c. and is here beat into bars and plates. Two miles further, at Levens, is the seat of lord Suffolk, where he sometimes passes the summer: it was a favourite place of his late countess; but this I did not see.

Oct. 10. I proceeded by Burton to Lancaster, twenty-two miles; very good country, well enclosed and wooded, with some common interspersed. Passed at the foot of Farlton-knot, a high fell four miles north of Lancaster; on a rising ground called Boulton (pronounced Bouton) we had a full view of Cartmell-sands, with here and there a passenger riding over them (it being low water); the points of Furness shooting far into the sea, and lofty mountains, partly covered with clouds, extending north of them. Lancaster also appeared very conspicuous and fine; for its most distinguished features, the castle and church, mounted on a green eminence, were all that could be seen. Wo is me! when I got thither, it was the second day of their fair; the inn, in the principal street, was a great old gloomy house, full of people; but I found tolerable quarters, and even slept two nights in peace.

In a fine afternoon I ascended the castle-hill; it takes up the higher top of the eminence on which it stands, and is irregularly round; encompassed with a deep moat: in front, towards the town, is a magnificent Gothic gateway, lofty and huge; the overhanging battlements are supported by a triple range of corbels, the intervals pierced through, and showing the day from above. On its top rise light watch-towers of small height. It opens below with a grand pointed arch: over this is a wrought tabernacle, doubtless once containing its founder's figure; on one side a shield of France semi-quartered with England; on the other the same, with a label, ermine, for John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. This opens to a court within, which I did not much care to enter, being the county-gaol, and full of prisoners, both criminals and debtors. From this gateway the walls continue and join it to a vast square tower of great height, the lower part at least of remote antiquity; for it has small round-headed lights with plain short pillars on each side of them: there is a third tower, also square and of less dimensions. This is all the castle. Near it, and but little lower, stands the church, a large and plain Gothic fabric; the high square tower

at the west end has been rebuilt of late years, but nearly in the same style: there are no ornaments of arms, &c. any where to be seen; within, it is lightsome and spacious, but not one monument of antiquity, or piece of painted glass, is left. From the churchyard there is an extensive sea-view, (for now the tide had almost covered the sands, and filled the river) and besides the greatest part of Furness, I could distinguish Peel-castle on the isle of Fowdrey, which lies off its southern extremity. The town is built on the slope, and at the foot of the castle-hill, more than twice the bigness of Aukland, with many neat buildings of white stone, but a little disorderly in their position, and, "ad libitum," like Kendal: many also extend below on the keys by the river-side, where a number of ships were moored, some of them three-masted vessels decked out with their colours in honour of the fair. Here is a good bridge of four arches over the Lune, that runs, when the tide is out, in two streams divided by a bed of gravel, which is not covered but in spring-tides; below the town it widens to near the breadth of the Thames at London, and meets the sea at five or six miles distance to south-west.

Oct. 11. I crossed the river and walked over a peninsula, three miles, to the village of Pooton, which stands on the beach. An old fisherman mending his nets (while I inquired about the danger of passing those sands) told me, in his dialect, a moving story; how a brother of the trade, a cockler, as he styled him, driving a little cart with two daughters (women grown) in it, and his wife on horseback following, set out one day to pass the seven-mile sands, as they had frequently been used to do, (for no body in the village knew them better than the old man did); when they were about halfway over, a thick fog rose, and as they advanced they found the water much deeper than they expected: the old man was puzzled; he stopped, and said he would go a little way to find some mark he was acquainted with; they stayed awhile for him, but in vain; they called aloud, but no reply: at last the young women pressed their mother to think where they were, and go on; she would not leave the place; but wandered about forlorn and amazed; she would not quit her horse and get into the cart with them: they determined, after much time wasted, to turn back, and give themselves up to the guidance of their horses. The old woman was soon

washed off, and perished; the poor girls clung close to their cart, and the horse, sometimes wading and sometimes swimming, brought them back to land alive, but senseless with terror and distress, and unable for many days to give any account of themselves. The bodies of their parents were found next ebb; that of the father a very few paces distant from the spot where he had left them.

In the afternoon I wandered about the town, and by the key, till it grew dark.

Oct. 12. I set out for Settle by a fine turnpike-road, twenty-nine miles, through a rich and beautiful enclosed country, diversified with frequent villages and churches, very unequal ground; and on the left the river Lune winding in a deep valley, its hanging banks clothed with fine woods, through which you catch long reaches of the water, as the road winds about at a considerable height above it. In the most picturesque part of the way, I passed the park belonging to the Hon. Mr. Clifford, a Catholic. The grounds between him and the river are indeed charming;* the house is

* This scene opens just three miles from Lancaster, on what is called the Queen's Road. To see the view in perfection, you must go into a field on the left. Here Ingleborough, behind a variety of lesser mountains, makes the back-ground of the prospect: on

ordinary, and the park nothing but a rocky fell scattered over with ancient hawthorns. Next I came to Hornby, a little town on the river Wanning, over which a handsome bridge is now building; the castle, in a lordly situation, attracted me, so I walked up the hill to it: first presents itself a large white ordinary sashed gentleman's house, and behind it rises the ancient Keep, built by Edward Stanley, lord Monteagle. He died about 1529, in King Henry the Eighth's time. It is now only a shell, the rafters are laid within it as for flooring. I went up a winding stone-stair-case in one corner to the leads, and at the angle is a single hexagon watch-tower, rising some feet higher, fitted up in the taste of a modern summer-house, with sash-windows in gilt frames, a stucco cupola, and on the top a vast gilt eagle, built by Mr. Charteris, the present possessor. He is the second son of the earl of Wemys, brother to the lord Elcho,

each hand of the middle distance, rise two sloping hills; the left clothed with thick woods, the right with variegated rock and heath: between them, in the most fertile of valleys, the Lune serpentine for many a mile, and comes forth ample and clear, through a well-wooded and richly pastured fore-ground. Every feature, which constitutes a perfect landscape of the extensive sort, is here not only boldly marked, but also in its best position.

and grandson to colonel Charteris, whose name he bears.

From the leads of the tower there is a fine view of the country round, and much wood near the castle. Ingleborough, which I had seen before distinctly at Lancaster to north-east, was now completely wrapped in clouds, all but its summit; which might have been easily mistaken for a long black cloud too, fraught with an approaching storm. Now our road began gradually to mount towards the Apenninæ, the trees growing less and thinner of leaves, till we came to Ingleton, eighteen miles; it is a pretty village, situated very high, and yet in a valley at the foot of that huge monster of nature, Ingleborough: two torrents cross it, with great stones rolled along their beds instead of water; and over them are flung two handsome arches. The nipping air, though the afternoon was growing very bright, now taught us we were in Craven; the road was all up and down, though no where very steep; to the left were mountain-tops, to the right a wide valley, all enclosed ground, and beyond it high hills again. In approaching Settle, the crags on the left drew nearer to our way, till we descended Brunton-brow into a cheerful valley (though thin of trees)

to Giggleswick, a village with a small piece of water by its side, covered over with coots; near it a church, which belongs also to Settle; and half a mile farther, having passed the Ribble over a bridge, I arrived there; it is a small market-town standing directly under a rocky fell; there are not in it above a dozen good-looking houses; the rest are old and low, with little wooden porticos in front. My inn pleased me much, (though small) for the neatness and civility of the good woman that kept it; so I lay there two nights, and went,

Oct. 13. To visit Gordale-scar, which lay six miles from Settle; but that way was directly over a fell, and as the weather was not to be depended on, I went round in a chaise, the only way one could get near it in a carriage, which made it full thirteen miles, half of it such a road! but I got safe over it, so there's an end, and came to Malham (pronounced Maum) a village in the bosom of the mountains, seated in a wild and dreary valley.—From thence I was to walk a mile over very rough ground, a torrent rattling along on the left hand; on the cliffs above hung a few goats; one of them danced and scratched an ear with its hind foot in a place where I would not have stood stock-still

For all beneath the moon.

As I advanced, the crags seemed to close in, but discovered a narrow entrance turning to the left between them: I followed my guide a few paces, and the hills opened again into no large space; and then all farther way is barred by a stream that, at the height of about fifty feet, gushes from a hole in the rock, and spreading in large sheets over its broken front, dashes from steep to steep, and then rattles away in a torrent down the valley: the rock on the left rises perpendicular, with stubbed yew-trees and shrubs staring from its side, to the height of at least 300 feet; but these are not the thing: it is the rock to the right, under which you stand to see the fall, that forms the principal horror of the place. From its very base it begins to slope forwards over you in one block or solid mass without any crevice in its surface, and overshadows half the area below with its dreadful canopy; when I stood at (I believe) four yards distance from its foot, the drops, which perpetually distil from its brow, fell on my head; and in one part of its top, more exposed to the weather, there are loose stones that hang in air, and threaten visibly some idle spectator with instant

destruction; it is safer to shelter yourself close to its bottom, and trust to the mercy of that enormous mass which nothing but an earthquake can stir. The gloomy uncomfortable day well suited the savage aspect of the place, and made it still more formidable: I stayed there, not without shuddering, a quarter of an hour, and thought my trouble richly paid; for the impression will last for life. At the ale-house where I dined in Malham, Vivares, the landscape-painter, had lodged for a week or more; Smith and Sellers had also been there, and two prints of Gordale have been engraved by them.

Oct. 14. Leaving my comfortable inn, to which I had returned from Gordale, I set out for Skipton, sixteen miles. From several parts of the road, and in many places about Settle, I saw at once the three famous hills of this country, Ingleborough, Penigent, and Pendle; the first is esteemed the highest, and their features not to be described, but by the pencil.*

* Without the pencil nothing indeed is to be described with precision; and even then that pencil ought to be in the very hand of the writer, ready to supply with outlines every thing that his pen cannot express by words. As far as language can describe, Mr. Gray has, I think, pushed its powers: for rejecting, as I before hinted, every general unmeaning and hyperbolic phrase, he has

Craven, after all, is an unpleasant country when seen from a height; its valleys are

selected (both in this journal, and on other similar occasions) the plainest, simplest, and most direct terms : yet notwithstanding his judicious care in the use of these, I must own I feel them defective. They present me, it is true, with a picture of the same species, but not with the identical picture : my imagination receives clear and distinct, but not true and exact images. It may be asked then, why am I entertained by well-written descriptions ? I answer, because they amuse when they do not inform me ; and because, after I have seen the places described, they serve to recall to my memory the original scene, almost as well as the truest drawing or picture. In the mean while, my mind is flattered by thinking it has acquired some conception of the place, and rests contented in an innocent error, which nothing but ocular proof can detect, and which, when detected, does not diminish the pleasure I had before received, but augments it by superadding the charms of comparison and verification ; and herein I would place the real and only merit of verbal prose description. To speak of poetical, would lead me beyond the limits as well as the purpose of this note. I cannot, however, help adding, that I have seen one piece of verbal description which completely satisfies me, because it is throughout assisted by masterly delineation. It is composed by the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, of Cheam in Surrey ; and contains, amongst other places, an account of the very scenes which, in this tour, our author visited. This gentleman, possessing the conjoined talent of a writer and a designer, has employed them in this manuscript to every purpose of picturesque beauty, in the description of which, a correct eye, a practised pencil, and an eloquent pen could assist him. He has, consequently, produced a work *unique* in its kind. But I have said it is in manuscript, and I am afraid, likely to continue so ; for would his modesty permit him to print it, the great expense of plates would make its publication almost impracticable.

chiefly wide, and either marshy or enclosed pasture, with a few trees. Numbers of black cattle are fatted here, both of the Scotch breed, and a larger sort of oxen with great horns. There is little cultivated ground, except a few oats.

Skipton, to which I went through Long-Preston and Gargrave, is a pretty large market-town, in a valley, with one very broad street gently sloping downwards from the castle, which stands at the head of it. This is one of our good countess's buildings,* but on old foundations; it is not very large, but of a handsome antique appearance, with round towers, a grand gateway, bridge, and moat, surrounded by many old trees. It is in good repair and kept up as a habitation of the earl of Thanet, though he rarely comes thither: what with the sleet, and a foolish dispute about chaises, that delayed me, I did not see the inside of it, but went on fifteen miles, to Otley; first up Shode-bank, the steepest hill I ever saw a road carried over in England, for it mounts in a strait line (without any other repose for the horses than by placing stones every now and then behind the wheels) for a full mile; then the

* Anne countess of Pembroke and Montgomery.

road goes on a level along the brow of this high hill over Rumbald-moor, till it greatly descends into Wharldale, so they call the vale of the wharf; and a beautiful vale it is, well wooded, well cultivated, well inhabited, but with high crags at a distance, that border the green country on either hand; through the midst of it, deep, clear, full to the brink, and of no inconsiderable breadth, runs in long windings the river. How it comes to pass that it should be so fine and copious a stream here, and at Tadcaster (so much lower) should have nothing but a wide stony channel without water, I cannot tell you. I passed through Long Addingham, Ilkeley (pronounced Eecly) distinguished by a lofty brow of loose rocks to the right: Burley, a neat and pretty village, among trees. on the opposite side of the river lay Middleton-Lodge, belonging to a Catholic gentleman of that name; Weston, a venerable stone fabric, with large offices, of Mr. Vavasour, the meadows in front gently descending to the water, and behind a great and shady wood; Farley (Mr. Fawkes's) a place like the last, but larger, and rising higher on the side of the hill. Otley is a large airy town, with clean but low rustic buildings, and a bridge over the wharf; I went into its spa-

cious Gothic church which has been new-roofed, with a flat stucco-ceiling; in the corner of it is the monument of Thomas lord Fairfax, and Helen Aske, his lady, descended from the Cliffords and Latimers, as her epitaph says; the figures, not ill-cut, (particularly his in armour, but bareheaded) lie on the tomb. I take them to be the parents of the famous sir Thomas Fairfax.

CXLV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

April 18, 1770.

I HAVE utterly forgot where my journal left off, but I think it was after the account of Gordale near Settle; if so, there was little more worth your notice: the principal things were Wharldale, in the way from Skipton to Otley, and Kirkstall abbey, three miles from Leeds * * * *†. Kirkstall is a noble ruin in the semi-saxon style of building, as old as King Stephen, towards the end of his reign, 1152. The whole church is still standing,

† Here a paragraph, describing Wharldale in the foregoing journal, was repeated.

the roof excepted, seated in a delicious quiet valley, on the banks of the river Aire, and preserved with religious reverence by the duke of Montagu. Adjoining to the church, between that and the river, are variety of chapels and remnants of the abbey, shattered by the encroachments of the ivy, and surrounded by many a sturdy tree, whose twisted roots break through the fret of the vaulting, and hang streaming from the roofs. The gloom of these ancient cells, the shade and verdure of the landscape, the glittering and murmur of the stream, the lofty towers, and long perspectives of the church, in the midst of a clear bright day, detained me for many hours, and were the truest objects for my glass I have yet met with any where. As I lay at that smoky, ugly, busy town of Leeds, I dropped all-further thoughts of my journal; and after passing two days at Mason's (though he was absent) pursued my way by Nottingham, Leicester, Harborough, Kettering, Thrapston, and Huntingdon, to Cambridge, where I arrived on the 22d of October, having met with no rain to signify till this last day of my journey. There's luck for you!

I do think of seeing Wales this summer, having never found my spirits lower than at

present, and feeling that motion and change of the scene is absolutely necessary to me; I will make Aston in my way to Chester, and shall rejoice to meet you there the last week in May. Mason writes me word that he wishes it; and though his old house is down, and his new one not up, proposes to receive us like princes in grain.

CXLVI.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.*

I RECEIVED your letter at Southampton; and as I would wish to treat every body according to their own rule and measure of good breeding, have, against my inclination, waited till now before I answered it, purely out of fear and respect, and an ingenuous diffidence of my own abilities. If you will not take this as an excuse, accept it at least as a well-turned period, which is always my principal concern.

* This letter was written the 19th of November, 1764; but as it delineates another abbey, in a different manner, it seems to make no improper companion to that which precedes it.

So I proceed to tell you that my health is much improved by the sea: not that I drank it, or bathed in it, as the common people do: no! I only walked by it and looked upon it. The climate is remarkably mild, even in October and November; no snow has been seen to lie there for these thirty years past; the myrtles grow in the ground against the houses, and Guernsey lilies bloom in every window: the town, clean and well-built, surrounded by its old stone walls, with their towers and gateways, stands at the point of a peninsula, and opens full south to an arm of the sea, which, having formed two beautiful bays on each hand of it, stretches away in direct view, till it joins the British channel; it is skirted on either side with gently rising-grounds, clothed with thick wood, and directly cross its mouth rise the high lands of the Isle of White at a distance, but distinctly seen. In the bosom of the woods (concealed from profane eyes) lie hid the ruins of Netley abbey; there may be richer and greater houses of religion, but the abbot is content with his situation. See there, at the top of that hanging meadow, under the shade of those old trees that bend into a half circle about it, he is walking slowly (good man!) and telling his beads for the souls of his be-

nefactors, interred in that venerable pile that lies beneath him. Beyond it (the meadows still descending) nods a thicket of oaks that mask the building, and have excluded a view too garish and luxuriant for a holy eye; only on either hand they leave an opening to the blue glittering sea. Did you not observe how, as that white sail shot by and was lost, he turned and crossed himself to drive the tempter from him that had thrown that distraction in his way? I should tell you that the ferryman who rowed me, a lusty young fellow, told me that he would not for all the world pass a night at the abbey (there were such things seen near it) though there was a power of money hid there. From thence I went to Salisbury, Wilton, and Stonehenge: but of these things I say no more, they will be published at the University press.

P. S. I must not close my letter without giving you one principal event of my history; which was, that, (in the course of my late tour) I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the sun's levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to right and left, rolling over one

another in great smoky wreaths, and the tide (as it flowed gently in upon the sands) first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue; and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness that (before I can write these five words) was grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one, too glorious to be distinctly seen.* It is very odd it makes no figure on paper; yet I shall remember it as long as the sun, or at least as long as I endure. I wonder whether any body ever saw it before? I hardly believe it.

CXLVII.

TO MR. BEATTIE.

• Pembroke-Hall, July 2, 1770.

I REJOICE to hear that you are restored to better state of health, to your books, and to your muse once again. That forced dis-

* This puts me in mind of a similar description written by Dr. Jeremy Taylor, which I shall here beg leave to present to the reader, who will find by it that the old divine had occasionally as much power of description as even our modern poet "As when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness; gives light to the cock, and calls up the lark to matins; and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps

sipation and exercise we are obliged to fly to as a remedy, when this frail machine goes wrong, is often almost as bad as the distemper we would cure; yet I too have been constrained of late to pursue a like regimen, on account of certain pains in the head (a sensation unknown to me before) and of great dejection of spirits. This, sir, is the only excuse I have to make you for my long silence, and not (as perhaps you may have figured to yourself) any secret reluctance I had to tell you my mind concerning the specimen you so kindly sent me of your new poem:* on the contrary, if I had seen any thing of importance to disapprove, I should have hastened to inform you, and never doubted of being forgiven. The truth is, I greatly like all I have seen, and wish to see more. The design is simple, and pregnant with poetical ideas of various kinds, yet seems somehow imperfect at the end. Why may not young Edwin, when necessity has driven him to

over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns ***; and still (while a man tells the story) the sun gets up higher till he shows a fair face and a full light." J. Taylor's *Holy Dying*, p. 17.

* This letter was written in answer to one that enclosed only a part of the first book of the *Minstrel* in manuscript, and I believe a sketch of Mr. Beattie's plan for the whole.

take up the harp, and assume the profession of a minstrel, do some great and singular service to his country? (what service I must leave to your invention) such as no general, no statesman, no moralist, could do without the aid of music, inspiration, and poetry. This will not appear an improbability in those early times, and in a character then held sacred, and respected by all nations: besides, it will be a full answer to all the hermit has said, when he dissuaded him from cultivating these pleasing arts; it will show their use, and make the best panegyric of our favourite and celestial science. And lastly, (what weighs most with me) it will throw more of action, pathos, and interest into your design, which already abounds in reflection and sentiment. As to description, I have always thought that it made the most graceful ornament of poetry, but never ought to make the subject. Your ideas are new, and borrowed from a mountainous country; the only one that can furnish truly picturesque scenery. Some trifles in the language or versification you will permit me to remark. * * *

I will not enter at present into the merits of your *Essay on Truth*, because I have not yet given it all the attention it deserves,

though I have read it through with pleasure; besides, I am partial; for I have always thought David Hume a pernicious writer, and believe he has done as much mischief here as he has in his own country. A turbid and shallow stream often appears to our apprehensions very deep. A professed sceptic can be guided by nothing but his present passions (if he has any) and interests; and to be masters of his philosophy we need not his books or advice, for every child is capable of the same thing, without any study at all. Is not that *naïveté* and good humour, which his admirers celebrate in him, owing to this, that he has continued all his days an infant, but one that unhappily has been taught to read and write? That childish nation, the French, have given him vogue and fashion, and we, as usual, have learned from them to admire him at second-hand.*

* On a similar subject Mr. Gray expresses himself thus in a letter to Mr. Walpole, dated March 17, 1771: "He must have a very good stomach that can digest the *Crambe recæta* of Voltaire. Atheism is a vile dish, though all the cooks of France combine to make new sauces to it. As to the soul, perhaps they may have none on the continent; but I do think we have such things in England. Shakspeare, for example, I believe had several to his own share. As to the Jews (though they do not eat pork) I like them because they are better Christians than Voltaire." This was written only

CXLVIII.

TO MR. NICHOLLS.

Pembroke-Hall, Jan. 26, 1771.

I REJOICE you have met with Froissard, he is the Herodotus of a barbarous age; had he but had the luck of writing in as good a language, he might have been immortal! His locomotive disposition, (for then there was no other way of learning things) his simple curiosity, his religious credulity, were much

three months before his death; and I insert it to show how constant and uniform he was in his contempt of infidel writers. Dr. Beattie received only one letter more from his correspondent, dated March 8, 1771. It related to the first book of the Minstrel, now sent to him in print, and contained criticisms on particular passages, and commendations of particular stanzas. Those criticisms the author attended to in a future edition, because his good taste found that they deserved his attention; the passages therefore being altered, the strictures die of course. As to the notes of commendation, the poem itself abounds with so many striking beauties, that they need not even the hand of Mr. Gray to point them out to a reader of any feeling: all therefore that I shall print of that letter, is the concluding paragraph relating to his Essay on the Immutability of Truth. "I am happy to hear of your success in another way, because I think you are serving the cause of human nature, and the true interests of mankind; your book is read here too, and with just applause."

like those of the old Grecian.* When you have *tant chevauché*, as to get to the end of him, there is Monstrelet waits to take you up, and will set you down at Philip de Commines; but previous to all these, you should have read Villehardouin and Joinville. I do not think myself bound to defend the character of even the best of kings:† pray slash them all and spare not.

It would be strange too if I should blame your Greek studies, or find fault with you for reading Isocrates; I did so myself twenty years ago, and in an edition at least as bad as yours. The Panegyric, the de Pace, Areopagitic, and Advice to Philip, are by far the noblest remains we have of this writer, and equal to most things extant in the Greek tongue; but it depends on your judgment to distinguish between his real and occasional opinion of things, as he directly contradicts in one place what he has advanced in another: for example, in the Panathenaic, and the de Pace, &c. on the naval power of Athens; the latter of the two is undoubtedly his own undisguised sentiment.

* See more of his opinion of this author, Letter CVII.

† I suppose his correspondent had made some strictures on the character of Henry IV. of France.

I would by all means wish you to comply with your friend's request, and write the letter he desires. I trust to the cause and to the warmth of your own kindness for inspiration. Write eloquently, that is from your heart, in such expressions as that will furnish.* Men sometimes catch that feeling from a stranger which should have originally sprung from their own heart.

CXLIX.

TO DR. WHARTON.

May 24, 1771.

My last summer's tour was through Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire, five of the most beautiful counties in the kingdom. The

* This short sentence contains a complete definition of natural eloquence : when it becomes an art it requires one more prolix, and our author seems to have begun to sketch it on a detached paper. " Its province (says he) is to reign over minds of slow perception and little imagination, to set things in lights they never saw them in ; to engage their attention by details and circumstances gradually unfolded, to adorn and heighten them with images and colours unknown to them, and to raise and engage their rude passions to the point to which the speaker wishes to bring them." * * *

very principal light and capital feature of my journey was the river Wye, which I descended in a boat for near forty miles from Ross to Chepstow. Its banks are a succession of nameless beauties; one out of many you may see not ill described by Mr. Whately, in his observations on gardening, under the name of the New-Weir; he has also touched upon two others, Tintern Abbey and Persfield, both of them famous scenes, and both on the Wye. Monmouth, a town I never heard mentioned, lies on the same river, in a vale that is the delight of my eyes, and the very seat of pleasure. The vale of Abergavenny, Ragland, and Chepstow castles; Ludlow, Malvern-hills, Hampton-court, near Lemster; the Leasowes, Hagley, the three cities and their cathedrals; and lastly Oxford (where I passed two days on my return with great satisfaction) were the rest of my acquisitions, and no bad harvest in my opinion; but I made no journal myself, else you should have had it: I have indeed a short one written by the companion of my travels,* that serves to recall and fix the fleeting images of these things.

I have had a cough upon me these three months, which is incurable. The approach-

* Mr. Nicholls.

ing summer I have sometimes had thoughts of spending on the continent; but I have now dropped that intention, and believe my expeditions will terminate in Old Park: but I make no promise, and can answer for nothing; my own employment so sticks in my stomach, and troubles my conscience: and yet travel I must, or cease to exist. Till this year I hardly knew what (mechanical) low spirits were, but now I even tremble at an east wind.

The gout, which he always believed hereditary in his constitution, (for both his parents died of that distemper) had now for several years attacked him in a weakly and unfixed manner; and the great temperance which he observed, particularly in regard to his drinking, served, perhaps, to prevent any severe paroxysm, but by no means eradicated the constitutional malady. In the latter end of May, 1771, just about the time he wrote the last letter, he removed to London, where he became feverish, and his dejection of spirits increased: the weather being then very sultry, our common friend, Dr. Gisborne, advised him, for an opener and freer air, to remove from his lodgings in Jermyn-street to Kensington, where he frequently attended him, and where Mr. Gray so far got the better of his disorder, as to be able to return to Cambridge; meaning from thence to set out very soon for Old Park, in hopes that travelling, from which he usually received so much benefit, would complete his cure: but on the 24th of July, while at dinner in the college hall, he felt a sudden nausea, which obliged him to rise from table and retire to his chamber. This continued to increase, and nothing staying on his stomach, he sent for his friend Dr. Glyn,

who finding it to be the gout in that part, thought his case dangerous, and called in Dr. Plumptree, the physical professor: they prescribed to him the usual cordials given in that distemper, but without any good effect; for on the 29th he was seized with a strong convulsion fit, which, on the 30th, returned with increased violence, and on the next evening he expired. He was sensible at times almost to the last, and from the first aware of his extreme danger; but expressed no visible concern at the thoughts of his approaching dissolution.

This account I draw up from the letters which Dr. Brown, then on the spot, wrote to me during his short illness; and as I felt strongly at the time what Tacitus has so well expressed on a similar occasion, I may, with propriety, use his words: "*Mihi, præter acerbissimam amici erepti, auget mœstitiam, quod assidere valetudini, fovere deficientem, satiari vultu, complexu, non contigit.*" I was then on the eastern side of Yorkshire, at a distance from the direct post, and therefore did not receive the melancholy intelligence soon enough to be able to reach Cambridge before his corpse had been carried to the place he had, by will, appointed for its interment. To see the last rights duly performed, therefore, fell to the lot of Dr. Brown; I had only to join him, on his return from the funeral, in executing the other trusts which his friendship had authorized us jointly to perform.

INDEX.

No.		Page
LXXXVII.	To Dr. Wharton.—On Strawberry-Hill.—Occasional remarks on Gothic architecture	3
LXXXVIII.	To Dr. Wharton.—Objection to publishing his Ode on the progress of Poetry singly.—Hint of his having other lyrical ideas by him. unfinished	5
LXXXIX.	To Mr. Stonbwer.—Of Monsignor Baiardi's book concerning Herculanum.—A poem of Voltaire —Encloses a part of his ode entitled the Bard	7
XC.	To Dr. Wharton.—On his removing from Peter-House to Pembroke-Hall.—His notion of a London hospital.—Of Sully's Memoirs.—Mason's four odes	9
XCI.	To Dr. Wharton.—Of his own indolence.—Memoirs of M. de la Porte and of Madame Staal.—Intention of coming to town	13
XCII.	To Mr. Mason.—Of his Reviewers.—Offers to send him Druidical anecdotes for his projected drama of Caractacus	14
XCIII.	To Mr. Mason.—On hearing Parry play on the Welsh harp, and finishing his ode after it.—Account of the old ballad on which the tragedy of Douglas was founded	17
XCIV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Expresses his aversion to notes accompanying his Bard	20
XCV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Inquiry into the genuineness of an Erse poem called "Hardicnute"	21
XCVI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Criticism of Rousseau's "Nouvelle Heloise"	22
XCVII.	To Mr. Hurd.—On the ill reception his two Pindaric odes met with on their publication	28
XCVIII.	To Mr. Mason —His opinion of the dramatic part of Caractacus	26

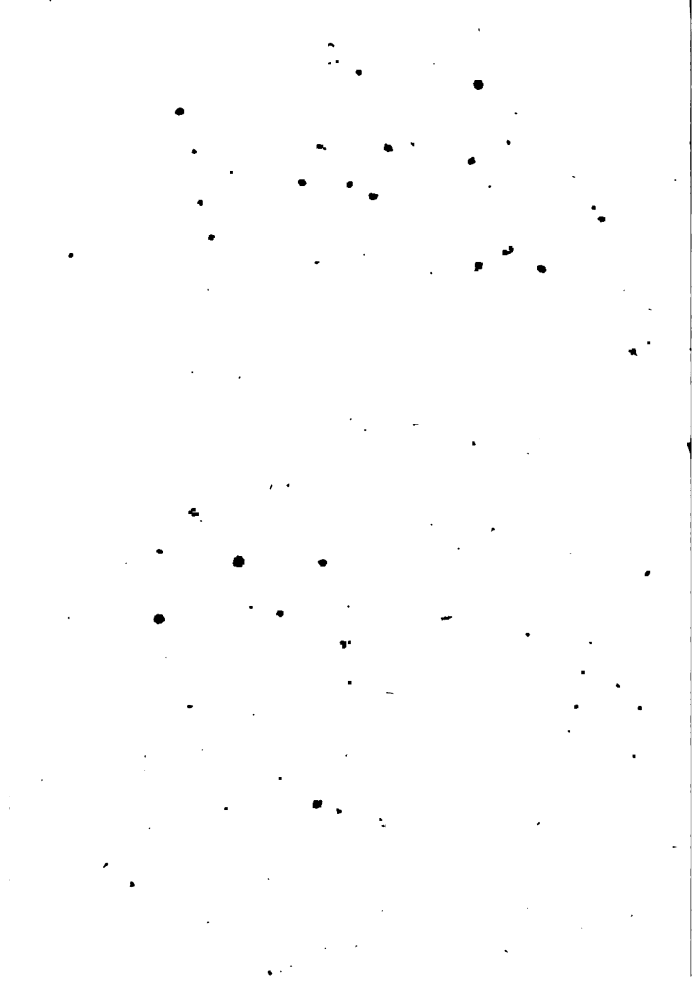
No.		Page
XCIX.	To Mr. Mason.—Dissuading him from retirement—Advice concerning Caractacus.—Criticisms on his Elegy written in the garden of a friend—Refusal of the office of Poet Laureat	33
C.	To Dr. Wharton.—Account of his present employment, in making out a list of places in England worth seeing	37
CI.	To Dr. Wharton.—On the fore-mentioned list.—Tragedy of Agis.—Various authors in the last volumes of Dodsley's Miscellany.—Dr. Swift's four last years of queen Anne	39
CII.	To Mr. Stonhewer.—On infidel writings and lord Shaftesbury	41
	Strictures on an impious position of lord Belingbroke	44
CIII.	To Dr. Wharton.—On the death of his son, and an excuse for not writing an epitaph	49
CIV.	To Mr. Palgrave.—Desiring him to communicate the remarks he should make in his tour through the north of England	53
CV.	To Mr. Mason.—Some remarks on a second manuscript copy of Caractacus	53
CVI.	To Mr. Palgrave.—Description of Mr. Gray's present situation in town, and of his reading in the British Museum	57
CVII.	To Dr. Wharton.—On employment.—Gardening.—Character of Froissard—King of Prussia's poems.—Tristram Shandy	59
CVIII.	To Mr. Stonhewer.—On the latter volumes of M. d'Alembert and the Erse fragments	63
CIX.	To Dr. Clarke.—His amusements with a party on the banks of the Thames.—Death of a Cambridge doctor.—Move of the Erse fragments	66
CX.	To Mr. Mason.—On two parodies of Mr. Gray's and Mr. Mason's odes—Extract of a letter from Mr. David Hume, concerning the authenticity of the Erse poetry	68
CXI.	To Dr. Wharton.—On his employments in the country.—Nouvelle Heloise—Fingal.—Character of Mr. Stillingfleet	73
CXII.	To Mr. Mason.—More concerning the Nouvelle Heloise.—Of Signor Elisi, and other opera singers	75
CXIII.	To Mr. Mason.—On his expectation of being made a residentiary of York.—Recovery of	

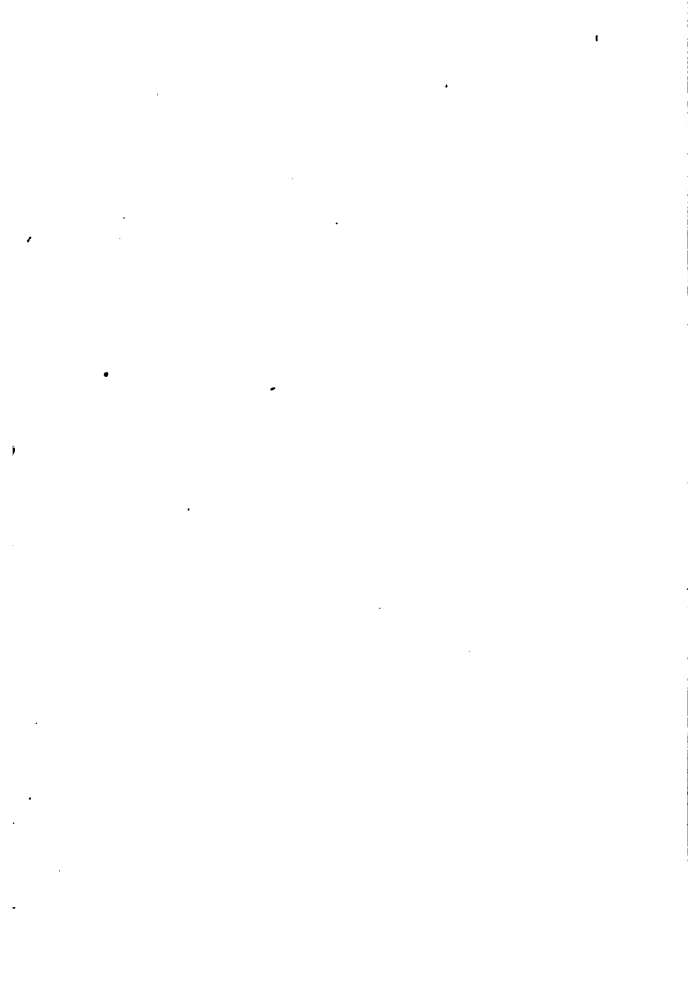
No.		Page
	lord *** from a dangerous illness.—Reason for writing the Epitaph on sir William Williams	78
CXIV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Remarks on Mr. Walpole's 'Anecdotes of Painting'	80
CXV.	To Dr. Wharton.—Description of Hardwick — Professor Turner's Death.—Aid of the peace	82
CXVI.	To Mr. Mason.—On count Algarotti's approbation of his and Mr. Mason's poetry.—Gothic architecture.—Plagiarism in Helvetius, from Elfrida	84
CXVII.	To Mr. Brown.—Sending him a message to write to a gentleman abroad relating to count Algarotti, and recommending the Erse poems	93
CXVIII.	Count Algarotti to Mr. Gray.—Complimentary, and sending him some dissertations of his own	95
CXIX.	To Dr. Wharton.—On Rousseau's Emile	96
CXX.	To Mr. How.—On receiving three of Count Algarotti's Treatises, and hinting an error which that author had fallen into, with regard to the English taste of gardening	98
CXXI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Ludicrous remarks on the Castle of Otranto, &c.	102
CXXII.	To Mr. Palgrave.—What he particularly advises him to see when abroad.	104
CXXIII.	To Mr. Beattie.—Thanks for a letter received from him, and an invitation from lord Strathmore to Glames	110
CXXIV.	To Dr. Wharton.—Description of the old castle of Glames, and part of the Highlands	111
CXXV.	To Mr. Beattie.—Apology for not accepting the degree of Doctor, offered him by the University of Aberdeen	124
CXXVI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Humorous recommendation of warm clothing.—French nastiness and atheism censured.—Description of an old picture	127
CXXVII.	To Dr. Wharton.—Buffon's Natural History.—Memoirs of Petrarch.—Mr. Walpole at Paris.—Description of a fine lady	130
CXXVIII.	To Dr. Wharton.—Tour into Kent.—New Bath Guide.—Another volume of Buffon	133
CXXIX.	To Mr. Nicholls.—On the affection due to a mother.—Description of that part of Kent from whence the letter was written	136

No.		Page
CXXX.	To Mr. Mason.—On the death of his wife	138
CXXXI.	To Mr. Beattie.—Thanks for a manuscript poem. —Mr. Adam Ferguson's Essay on Civil Society. —A compliment to lord Gray	139
CXXXII.	To Mr. Beattie.—On the projected edition of our author's poems in England and Scotland. —Commendation of Mr. Beattie's ode on Lord Hay's Birth-day	142
CXXXIII.	To Mr. How.—After perusing the whole of Count Algarotti's works in the Leghorn edi- tion, and his sentiments concerning them	145
CXXXIV.	To Mr. Beattie.—More concerning the Glasgow edition of his poems	148
CXXXV.	To Mr. Walpole.—Criticism on Mr. Walpole's Historic Doubts, &c.	150
CXXXVI.	To Mr. Walpole.—Excuses himself for not showing his poems to Mr. Walpole previous to their publication.—Speed and Leslie.— Boswell's History of Corsica	155
CXXXVII.	To Mr. Walpole.—Extracts from sir W. Corn- wallis's Essays.—Remarks on Stowe, Speed, Guthrie, &c.	160
CXXXVIII.	To the duke of Grafton.—Thanking him for his professorship	163
CXXXIX.	To Mr. Nicholls.—Account of Mr. Brocket's death, and of his being made his successor in the professorship	164
CXL.	To Mr. Beattie.—On the same subject	165
CXLI.	To Mr. Nicholls.—On the death of his uncle, governor Floyer, and advising him to take or- ders	167
CXLII.	To Mr. Nicholls.—Congratulating him upon his situation, and mentioning his own ode on the Installation of the new Chancellor	170
CXLIII.	To Mr. Beattie.—His reason for writing that ode	174
CXLIV.	To Dr. Wharton.—A journal of his tour through Westmoreland, Cumberland, and a part of Yorkshire	176
CXLV.	To Dr. Wharton.—Description of Kirkstall- Abbey, and some other places in Yorkshire	216
CXLVI.	To Mr. Nicholls.—Of Nettleby-Abbey and South- ampton	218
CXLVII.	To Mr. Beattie.—On the first part of his Min- strel, and his Essay on the Immutability of Truth.—Stricture on Mr. D. Hume	221

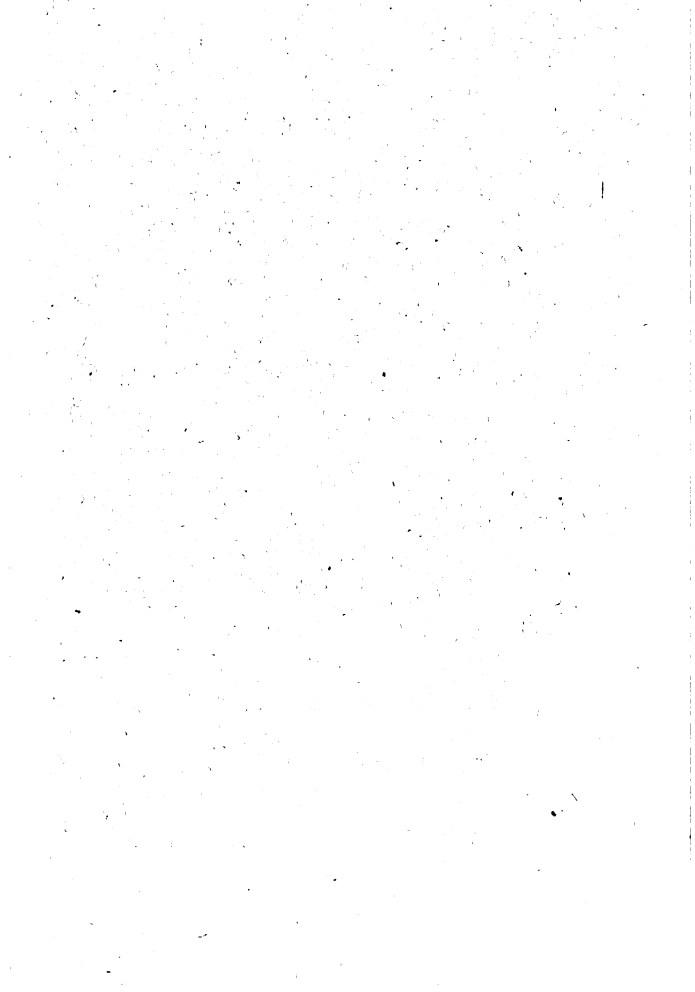
No.		Page
CXLVIII.	To Mr. Nicholls.—Character of Froissard and other old French historians.—And of Isocrates	235
CXLIX.	To Dr. Wharton.—Of his tour taken the year before to Monmouth, &c.—Intention of coming to Old Park.—And of his ill state of health	237

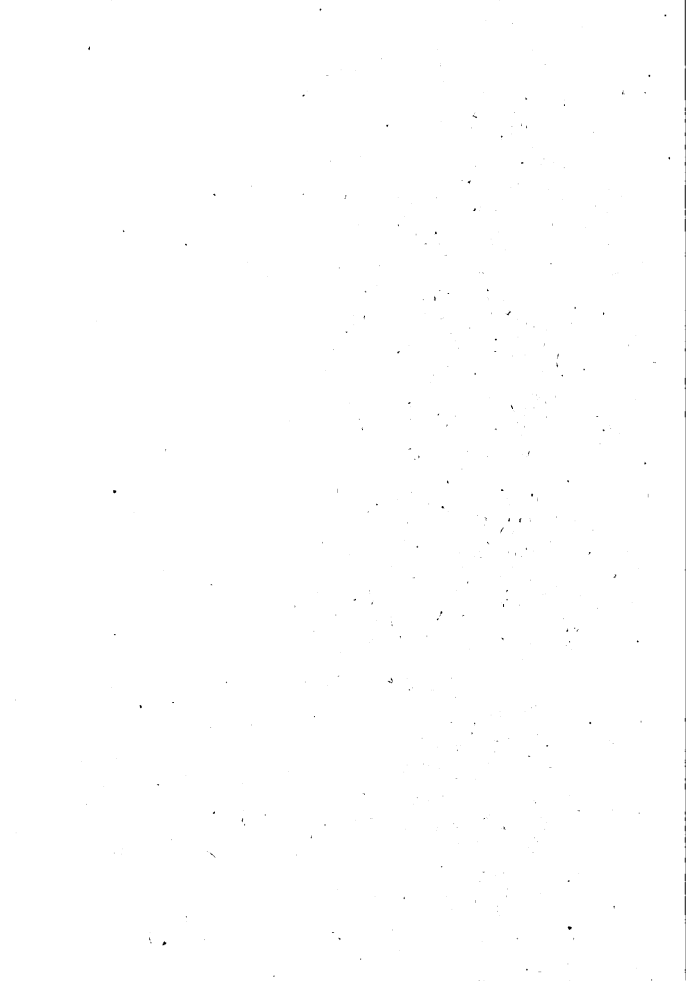
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